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N81d
No. 4313

'MISLIKE ME NOT FOR MY COMPLEXION': SHAKESPEAREAN
INTERTEXTUALITY IN THE WORKS OF NINETEENTH-CENTURY
AFRICAN-AMERICAN WOMEN

DISSERTATION

Presented to the Graduate Council of the
University of North Texas in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

By

Amy Anastasia Birge, B.A.

Denton, Texas

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Birge, Amy Anastasia, "Mislike me not for my complexion": Shakespearean Intertextuality in the Works of Nineteenth-Century African-American Women. Doctor of Philosophy (English), August, 1996, 165pp., references, 146 titles.

Caliban, the ultimate figure of linguistic and racial indeterminacy in *The Tempest*, became for African-American writers a symbol of colonial fears of rebellion against oppression and southern fears of black male sexual aggression. My dissertation thus explores what I call the "Calibanic Quadrangle" in essays and novels by Anna Julia Cooper, Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, and Pauline Elizabeth Hopkins.

The figure of Caliban allows these authors to inflect the sentimental structure of the novel, to elevate Calibanic utterance to what Cooper calls "crude grandeur and exalted poesy," and to reveal the undercurrent of anxiety in nineteenth-century American attempts to draw rigid racial boundaries. The Calibanic Quadrangle enables this thorough critique because it allows the black woman writer to depict the oppression of the "Other," southern fears of black sexuality, the division between early black and white women's issues, and the enduring innocence of the progressive, educated, black female hero -- all within the legitimized boundaries of the Shakespearean text, which provides literary authority to the minority writer. I call the resulting Shakespearean intertextuality a Quadrangle because in each of these African-American works a Caliban figure, a black man or "tragic mulatto" who was once "petted" and educated, struggles within a hostile

environment of slavery and racism ruled by the Prospero figure, the wielder of "white magic," who controls reproduction, fears miscegenation, and enforces racial hierarchy. The Miranda figure, associated with the womb and threatened by the specter of miscegenation, advocates slavery and perpetuates the hostile structure. The Ariel figure, graceful and ephemeral, usually the "tragic mulatta" and a slave, desires her freedom and complements the Caliban figure. Each novel signals the presence of the paradigm by naming at least one character from *The Tempest* (Caliban in Cooper's *A Voice from the South*; "Mirandy" in Harper's *Iola Leroy*; Prospero in Hopkins's *Contending Forces*; and Ariel in Hopkins's *Hagar's Daughter*).

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Dr. Jocelyn Chadwick-Joshua, Dr. Dona Gower, and the staff of the Dallas Institute of Humanities and Culture for their support, encouragement, and brie.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
“MISLIKE ME NOT FOR MY COMPLEXION”: SHAKESPEARE'S BLACK CHARACTERS	8
TWAIN'S TWINS: SHAKESPEAREAN RACIAL INDETERMINACY IN <i>PUDDIN'HEAD WILSON</i>	51
SHAKESPEAREAN INTERTEXTUALITY IN ANNA JULIA COOPER'S <i>A VOICE FROM THE SOUTH</i>	62
THE CALIBANIC QUADRANGLE IN FRANCES E. W. HARPER'S <i>IOLA LEROY: OR, SHADOWS UPLIFTED</i>	86
SHAKESPEAREAN RE-VISONS IN THE NOVELS OF PAULINE E. HOPKINS	109
CONCLUSION	139
WORKS CITED	142

INTRODUCTION

Students and friends have described for me Shakespeare as they have seen him in Japanese, Russian, Spanish, Indonesian, and Italian, and the general report has been that audiences were as one in finding that Shakespeare represented *them* on the stage . . . Shakespeare has the largeness of nature itself, and through that largeness he senses nature's indifference. Nothing crucial in this largeness is culture-bound or gender-confined.

-- Harold Bloom, *The Western Canon*, 1994.

What is it that makes the great English bard pre-eminent as the photographer of the human soul? Where did he learn the universal language so that Parthians, Medes and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, in Egypt and Libya, in Crete and Arabia do hear every one in our own tongue the wonderful revelations of this myriad mind? How did he learn our language? Is it not that his own soul was infinitely receptive to Nature, the dear old nurse, in all her protean forms?

-- Anna Julia Cooper, *A Voice from the South*, 1892.

As one whose interests lay jointly in the field of Shakespearean drama and the works of nineteenth-century black women writers, the greatest hindrance to, as well as the greatest impetus for my research has been backlash; a term I use to designate the recent trend toward conservative, white/European dominated canonical revision in literature, which, coupled with increasing racial tension in the United States, creates the necessary space for my research. Harold Bloom places Shakespeare at the "Center of the Western Canon" in Chapter Two of *The Western Canon*, and, as in the quotation above, insists that Shakespeare has a "largeness of nature" that is "neither culture-bound nor gender-confined." I must agree with Bloom that Shakespeare informs and

infuses the whole of the canon in a way that transcends a multitude of languages, cultures, and visions of gender -- but such sweeping pronouncements of "largeness" must be accompanied by demonstration.

Bloom discovers the infusion of Shakespeare in works of such canonical artists and philosophers as Milton, Goethe, Hegel, Nietzsche, Joyce, Melville, Emerson, and Hawthorne. Bloom speaks of the influence of Shakespeare in Russia, France, Italy, and Spain, but quietly dances away from people of color -- from the representation, redaction, and refashioning of Shakespeare by the Third World. Bloom speaks of Shakespeare's "multiculturalism," but makes little effort to explore the full range of that term. (Throughout the dissertation I frequently refer to race, racism, and racialization--please understand that by "race" I mean the slippery societal construction rather than the bogus scientific classification so loved by the nineteenth century.) Bloom's work is representative of the wave of conservative backlash against the recovery of Third World texts, particularly those by women, that characterized the seventies and eighties in literary criticism.

While Bloom elevates Shakespeare's "multiculturalism" and denounces our "politicized fumbings" toward the same I wonder what to make of Shakespeare's people of color: Aaron, the Prince of Morocco, Othello, Cleopatra, Caliban, Hermia, and the "Dark Lady." Shakespeare clearly, as I discuss in chapter one, brings people of color and "racial" identity into his texts to question the societal myth of homogeneity. Thus, if the "Center of the Canon" was willing to undertake such issues,

why have we, the critics, become so prone to either dismiss them in the spirit of a "largeness" that is not "culture-bound" or specialize them to such a degree that a student of literature interested in Third World authors must find or create a class designed specifically for that purpose?

I owe my critical modus-operandi to three ethnographic critics: Toni Morrison, Kenneth Burke, and Henry Louis Gates, Jr. In *Playing in the Dark*, Toni Morrison explains that the Africanist presence in American literature is often subversive. I apply this theory to Shakespeare's plays as well. Kenneth Burke maintains that writers from minority populations will de-center a presumably authoritative text in order to create new meaning. Here I posit that Cooper, Harper, and Hopkins de-center the Shakespearean text, shift focus to Shakespeare's black characters, and weave new intertextual significance into their works.

Gates briefly identifies pastiche as a mode of Signifyin(g) in black texts, to "imply either homage to an antecedent text or futility in the face of a seemingly indomitable mode of representation" (xxvii). While all three of these women Signify on other black texts, their use of literary pastiche, Signifyin(g) on Shakespeare, creates intriguing new possibilities for both Shakespearean and nineteenth-century American criticism.

Why such a peculiar topic? My mother read aloud passages of Shakespeare's plays to soothe the aches and pains of my early childhood, and I suspect her brand of medicine engendered the interest in Shakespeare that developed when I began my graduate studies. As one of few African-Americans in the English department, I took

particular interest in Shakespeare's view of race in early modern England, yet the traditional readings I encountered left me somewhat disillusioned; it seemed there was little African-American scholarship on early modern texts. As I continued reading Shakespeare on my own, I realized, to my delight, there are more black characters in Shakespeare's plays than Othello, and while I found critics such as James Walvin and Kim F. Hall who would discuss the African in early modern drama, I found little speculation about *why* Shakespeare saw fit to include black characters in his work. While exploring early modern representations of the African, my desire to read more early African-American literature led me to *The Schomburg Library of Nineteenth-Century Black Women Writers*, published by Henry Louis Gates, Jr. in 1988. Gates's collection enabled me to discover that several nineteenth-century African-American women consistently weave Shakespearean characters and themes into their essays and novels, systematically re-fashioning Shakespeare's seemingly timeless black characters as a means of articulating specifically nineteenth-century American racial tensions. In particular I noticed that Caliban, the ultimate figure of linguistic and racial indeterminacy in *The Tempest*, became for these African-American writers a symbol of colonial fears of rebellion against oppression and southern fears of black male sexual aggression. My argument thus explores several incidences of such intertextuality, including what I call the "Calibanic Quadrangle," in essays and novels by Anna Julia Cooper, a feminist educator who became the fourth African-American to earn a Ph.D.; Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, a poetry and prose writer who travelled the country in the late

nineteenth-century speaking for the rights of African-American women and the need to "uplift the race;" and Pauline Elizabeth Hopkins, the author of several sentimental novels about the fate of the mulatto before and after the Civil War.

The figure of Caliban allows these authors to inflect the sentimental structure of the novel, to elevate Calibanic utterance to what Cooper calls "crude grandeur and exalted poesy," and to reveal the undercurrent of anxiety in nineteenth-century American attempts to draw rigid racial boundaries. The Calibanic Quadrangle enables this thorough critique because it allows the black woman writer to depict the oppression of the "Other," southern fears of black sexuality, the division between early black and white women's issues, and the enduring innocence of the progressive, educated, black female hero -- all within the legitimized boundaries of the Shakespearean text, which confers literary authority on the minority writer. I call the resulting Shakespearean intertextuality a Quadrangle because in each of these African-American works a Caliban figure, a black man or "tragic mulatto" who was once "petted" and educated, struggles within a hostile environment of slavery and racism ruled by the Prospero figure, the wielder of "white magic," who controls reproduction, fears miscegenation, and enforces racial hierarchy. The Miranda figure, associated with the womb and threatened by the specter of miscegenation, advocates slavery and perpetuates the hostile structure. The Ariel figure, graceful and ephemeral, usually the "tragic mulatta" and a slave, desires her freedom and complements the Caliban figure. Each novel signals the presence of the paradigm by naming at least one character from *The Tempest* (Caliban in Cooper's *A Voice from the*

South; "Mirandy" in Harper's *Iola Leroy*; Prospero in Hopkins's *Contending Forces*; and Ariel in Hopkins's *Hagar's Daughter*). Before I explore the Calibanic Quadrangle in nineteenth-century African-American writing, I show how early American racial discourse should be studied alongside that era's interest in Shakespeare by examining how Twain reveals the dynamic of racial tension and the complex problem of miscegenation with a method similar to Shakespeare's in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and the "Dark Lady" sonnets. In addition to the Calibanic Quadrangle, I also explore Cooper, Harper, and Hopkins's redactions of both black and white Shakespearean characters (including Aaron the Moor, Cleopatra, Hermia, Hamlet, and Bottom) as symbols of nineteenth-century racialized experience.

I hope to accomplish two goals. First, I wish to take scholarly interest in Shakespeare's black characters beyond historical accounts of early modern racist discourse and the myths of Africa that led to such discourse. I would examine instead how the black figure in Shakespeare's plays and sonnets subverts conventional interpretations of his works, as Toni Morrison identifies the subversive function of the Africanist presence in American literature.

Second, I would like to see long-neglected nineteenth-century African-American writers like Cooper, Harper, and Hopkins studied as both examples of the wide-ranging possibilities of Shakespearean influence and as rhetorically powerful authors in their own right. These writers provide the necessary complement to such canonical nineteenth-century American writers who explore issues of race, writers like Edgar Allan Poe,

William Dean Howells, and Mark Twain. Cooper, Harper, and Hopkins represent the largely forgotten African-American woman's voice -- a voice speaking out of deep personal insight into turbulent nineteenth-century race relations. Currently, critics such as Mary Helen Washington, Hazel V. Carby, Shelley Fisher-Fishkin, and Carla L. Peterson have brought these women to the attention of the academy, but the unavailability of their texts has resulted in very little critical study, little more than the textual recovery of the rich heritage of writing by African-American women they constitute. Virtually no study of the rhetorical strategies and literary possibilities of these texts exists, and I plan to open up a whole new territory in nineteenth-century American literature to scholars and students alike.

CHAPTER 1

"MISLIKE ME NOT FOR MY COMPLEXION": SHAKESPEARE'S

BLACK CHARACTERS

Few of [Shakespeare's] dramas are more undeniably built around a dominating idea than *The Merchant of Venice*. Practically every scene in it is dedicated in one way or another to the theme that what is on the surface is generally contradicted by what is underneath. Appearances are deceitful . . .

--Harold C. Goddard, "Othello and the Race Problem"

. . . I want to make it clear that radical subversiveness--not merely the schemer's attempt to seize existing authority but a challenge to the principles upon which authority was based--was possible in the Renaissance . . .

--Stephen Greenblatt, "Invisible Bullets: Renaissance Authority and Its Subversion"

Encoded or explicit, indirect or overt, the linguistic responses to an Africanist presence complicate texts, sometimes contradicting them entirely.

--Toni Morrison, *Playing in the Dark*

Mislike me not for my complexion, / The shadowed livery of the burnish'd sun, / To whom I am a neighbor and near bred.

--The Prince of Morocco, *The Merchant of Venice* 2.1.13

Why does Shakespeare write about characters of color? Perhaps he gave his audience a sense of the grandness of the world, showing them dark-skinned peoples in response to popular travel literature. Perhaps he became interested in the growing non-

English populations in Elizabethan England, and as part of a need to write "human nature" felt he must toss them into the mix for atmosphere.

But piquing curiosity in a way akin to the reason exotic animals such as pandas, zebras, and killer whales keep people visiting the San Diego Zoo does not account for the sheer number of Shakespearean characters of color, nor does it account for the function of their textual presence. Keeping in mind Bakhtin's theory of heteroglossia¹, we must assume that Shakespeare brings us Aaron, the Prince of Morocco, Othello, Caliban, Cleopatra, Hermia, and the elusive "Dark Lady" for some sociological purpose beyond introducing a little diversity in an all-male, all-white cast. Toni Morrison writes:

Linguistic responses to Africanism serve the text by further problematizing its matter with resonances and luminations. . . . provide paradox, ambiguity; strategize omissions, repetitions, disruptions, polarities, reifications, violence. In other words, they give the text a deeper, richer, more complex life than the sanitized one commonly presented to us. (66)

While Morrison's *Playing in the Dark* insists primarily on the subversive qualities of Africanism, or black characters, in canonical, generally white, American literature, I believe that, with some prodding from the author himself, we must examine how these black characters function in the body of Shakespeare's work. If we are to believe with Harold Bloom, and our impassioned high school English teachers, that Shakespeare is

"The Center of the Canon"², we must resign ourselves to the fact that many of his characters are black. Then we must discover what all those black people are doing in the one body of literature that nearly everyone agrees is canonical.

Whether we find ourselves on the side of Martin Orkin, seeing blackness separated from the signifier, and believing that with *Othello*, Shakespeare "opposes racism" (Orkin 188) or we take up with Michael Neill and believe that any attribution of anti-racist sentiment to Shakespeare is historically impossible³, we must continue to wrestle with race in Shakespeare's plays and Sonnets. The Harold C. Goddards of the world would have us whitewash Shakespeare for our students, instructing them to cling to the notion that "all that glisters is not gold," and "appearances are deceitful," yet remaining blissfully distant from issues of race that tear apart such platitudes--issues that Shakespeare engages in *The Merchant of Venice*, when Portia subverts niceties such as "appearances are deceitful," with a racist politesse comparable to "separate but equal." Lynda E. Boose asks a series of questions in "'The Getting of a Lawful Race,'" pointing out "just how many competing, potentially even contradictory, discourses lie tangled beneath the surface of the evolving notions of 'race' in early modern England" (39). The recent appearance of an MLA panel on "Shakespeare and Race," as well as Margot Hendricks and Patricia Parker's *Women, "Race," and Writing in the Early Modern Period*, reveal not only current trends toward ethnographic approaches to literature, but also a renewed interest in Shakespeare's people of color. Writers such as Eldred Jones, G.K. Hunter, Anthony Girard Barthelemy, Winthrop Jordan, Folarin

Shyllon and James Walvin have delved into Shakespeare and the early modern "race problem" for three decades, but we still don't quite know how or where to situate these black characters in Shakespeare's plays, or how to incorporate them, successfully, in the Shakespearean canon.

John Salway writes in *Shakespeare in the Changing Curriculum* that his interpretation of Iago brought a chorus of "Jungle Bells" from his white students (112), and Ania Loomba tells us that she "certainly enjoy[s] *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Othello* a great deal more today than [she] did as a student when [she] wasn't allowed to comment on the racial difference of their central figures" (24). A freshman student of mine in 1994, who had read *Othello* in high school, remarked "I didn't know Othello was supposed to be black!" Upon hearing my astonished response, (how could she have missed it?) the student told me that she knew Othello was black, but not like the black people she knew. Because I am most likely the first African-American teacher she had in college, she was embarrassed by her mistake, but I was not surprised. Students learn that *Othello* is about jealousy, *The Merchant of Venice* is about mercy (and not judging a book by its cover!), and they rarely come to terms with the blackness of the characters in relation to the multicultural classroom of the nineties. In today's classroom, our diverse students must learn Shakespeare in all his diversity. With the culture-crossing abilities of rap music and Spike Lee films, our students may be more receptive to Shakespeare's version of "the race problem" than we are.

It is not my desire to discuss early modern notions of race, myth-making travel

narratives, the equation of blackness with evil, or population statistics on blacks in England, since so many others have explored and continue to explore those subjects, but I believe if Shakespeare is to survive the O.J. Simpson trial and *IQ* we must take him from the ivory tower and present him to our students as the creator of Aaron, the first black in English drama to ask "Is black so base a hue?" (4.2.71), of the Prince of Morocco, whose presence threatens the very moral fabric of *Merchant*, of Othello, who continues to confound critics, of Caliban, who has become an attack metaphor for African-American writers, and of Cleopatra, whose race has been all but forgotten by most critics as she is now being de-vilified. Our students must hear Jonathan Crewe's pointed discussion of the "Black Woman" sonnets, and try to understand what Lysander means when he says, "Away, you Ethiop!" Henry Louis Gates, Jr. has opened the door to ethnographic criticism with *The Signifying Monkey*, and we do our students a disservice if we omit the importance of Aaron's name from our discussion of his role as "medieval vice," or fall back on "the quality of mercy" when Portia's dismissal of Morocco confounds us.

Aaron the Moor is undoubtedly a disruptive influence in Shakespeare's first tragedy--he's responsible for corrupting young minds, tricking Titus into chopping off his hand, and inciting all manner of chaos in *Titus Andronicus*. But why is he black? Many critics have put forth theories that Aaron was inspired by Muly Mahamet, and Shakespeare likely found a Moorish character in his source⁴, but why is Aaron's blackness so crucial to the play? Frank Kermode notes that in the "source" for *Titus*

"Aaron is a mere tool of the Queen, and the chapbook knows nothing of his love for the child or of his defiance at the end" (1021). Clearly, Aaron's blackness is meant to signify something other than "a convenient point upon which to discharge fear and frustration" (MacDonald 60), and we must be able to reach some conclusion beyond the "humanizing" of Aaron that enables us to "recognize that Aaron goes to his death as a human being, regardless of his sins and the accident of his color" (Bryant 35).

Surely Aaron's color is no accident, but Shakespeare's figuring of Aaron as "surrogate"⁵ father to Demetrius and Chiron, and loyal parent to the "tawny slave" complicates the notion that his blackness is a convenient signifier of evil. Aaron's blackness, the blackness of his child, and all of the significations that go with it: sexuality, fecundity, violence, and conversely, fierce paternity, subverts the idea of divine justice. The birth of the "blackamoor child" suggests one of the "major themes" of the play⁶--that evil will eventually show itself--a theme explicit in exclamations such as "How easily murder is discovered!" (2.3.287), and "Rome will despise her for this foul escape" (4.2.113). The child is undeniable, physical evidence of the ruin of the Empire by stealth and dissembling, yet when Aaron negotiates for the child's life, the child lives--a monument to Tamora's infidelity to the Emperor. I agree with Anthony Barthelemy that "by previously embracing blackness and sin, by indulging the black Moor and all that he signifies, Tamora's sons and the empress herself all become tainted by sin, revealed by blackness" (95), but not only will this child live, this child, if we are to believe Aaron's prediction, "will be a warrior and command a camp"

(4.2.180). Despite the fact that Aaron's blackness physically "taints" the evil deeds in *Titus*, this signifier of evil (albeit chosen evil)⁷ will grow up strong and become a military power--presumably a further threat to Rome. Thus Aaron's direct utterance to the child, with its racial invective and acknowledgement of "taint," contains a positive vision of the future:

Come on, you thick-lipped slave, I'll bear you hence
 For it is you that puts us to our shifts.
 I'll make you feed on berries and on roots,
 And feed on curds and whey and suck the goat,
 And cabin in a cave, and bring you up
 To be a warrior and command a camp.

(4.2.175-180)

Aaron's relationship to his son reveals the role of blackness in *Titus Andronicus*: the role of the ongoing disruptive influence, the "other" that will always destroy society's carefully constructed notions of itself. While Titus justifies the death of Mutius with the abrupt, cacophonous "Nor thou, nor he, are any sons of mine" (1.1.294), Aaron's assumption of fatherhood is hyperbolic, and he does what Titus never does, the lack of which makes Titus the most unlikable Shakespearean tragic hero. Aaron identifies the baby with himself, not in shallow terms of "a staff of honor for mine age" (1.1.198), but "My mistress is my mistress, this myself, / The vigour and picture of my youth" (4.2.107-8). Aaron's defence of blackness, "Is black so base a hue?" (4.2.71), is a

first for English drama, yes, a separation of signifier and signified. Aaron's statement invites the kind of reductiveness that we find everywhere in the late twentieth century--that Aaron's color is, indeed, an "accident," but the ability of that blackness to disrupt an empire calls for the realization that blackness subverts the reductiveness that results in the myth of homogeneity. Aaron's disruption of that homogeneity places him squarely in the role of the African trickster.

Aaron's name is biblically significant, as is his act of parodic signification and double-voicedness, considering Henry Louis Gates, Jr.'s theory of Signifyin(g). The brother of Moses, Aaron, took the role of interpreter when Moses doubted that he could speak well enough to rouse the people: "And Aaron spake all the words which the LORD had spoken unto Moses, and did the signs in the sight of the people. And the people believed" (Exodus 4:30-1). The biblical Aaron functioned as the interpreter of God's word through Moses as Shakespeare's Aaron functions as the interpreter of Roman society through linguistic parody.

We may view Aaron as the sometimes untrustworthy Esu-Elegbara, the wily interpreter of Ifa (truth).⁸ The trickster is double-voiced, and presents two sides of his face in order to create chaos and indeterminacy⁹. Aaron parodies the other characters linguistically, but uses a clear, hyperbolic poetry when he's alone (a "bombastic" speech that will later characterize the Prince of Morocco, Othello, and Caliban and further demarcate their linguistic difference). "Then, Aaron, arm thy heart, and fit thy thoughts, / To mount aloft with thy imperial mistress . . ." (2.1.12-3), he says when

plotting his scheme, and when he fights for the life of his child, "I am a lamb, but if you brave the Moor, / The chafed boar, the mountain lioness, / The ocean swells not so as Aaron storms" (4.2.137-9). Both of the above quotations, as well as his physical presence in a sea of white Romans, "announce" his difference--his part in the continuing dialectic (though often silent)¹⁰ engendered by the voice of the "other," but both quotations also illustrate that Aaron is double-voiced, for we know that Aaron's deferential term "thy imperial mistress" carries with it the charge of his carnality, and only the most kind reader of *Titus Andronicus* would agree that Aaron is a "lamb" until provoked.

In Aaron's speech acts with other characters, he uses linguistic parody to subvert the hegemony of Rome, the Goths, and the white society in which he functions, as in "Hark, ye lords, you see I have given her physic" (4.2.162), ironically referring to the panicked Goths as his superiors, and assuming the authority of a physician while committing a murder. Aaron's numerous asides enhance his parodic role. Aaron parodies Titus' concept of deceit within honesty after he persuades him to cut off his hand:

Tit. Come hither, Aaron. I'll deceive them both;

Lend me thy hand, and I will give thee mine.

Aar. [Aside] If that be call'd deceit, I will be honest

And never whilst I live deceive men so. (3.1.186-189)

Here Aaron parodies the binary opposition of honesty / deceit. Although he realizes

that he is the accomplished dissembler of the two, Aaron, surprisingly, brings the concept of honesty to the dialogue (with the audience), troubling Roman notions of loyalty.

Aaron's mastery of the linguistic and sociological markers of the Romans and the Goths enables him to separate Titus from his hand and Demetrius and Chiron from their heads. Aaron's persuasiveness and successful dissembling comes from his ability to mask himself and his intent, an ability that Gates calls linguistic masking: "the verbal sign of the mask of blackness that demarcates the white linguistic realm and the black" (75). Aaron's "mask of blackness" allows him to bow and scrape and play the part of the black menial until the end.¹¹ Aaron's infamous final words, "If one good deed in all my life I did, / I do repent it from my very soul" (5.3.189-90), parody Christian repentance and the desire for redemption. As the trickster, Aaron resides on the boundary of word and action, and his parodic defiance at the end upstages Lucius's plan of vengeance against Tamora's dead body. Aaron's final words hang in the air ominously, cracking the door to indeterminacy, fulfilling the role of the "other" in Shakespeare's plays.

Like Aaron's claims of gentleness, the seemingly innocuous biblical tale of Jacob and Laban's flocks proves a subversive influence in *The Merchant of Venice*. The story of Jacob's ingenuity in gaining Laban's flocks has racial significance here because of the reference to black and "speckled" lambs and their occurrence through visual contact with peeled "fresh rods of poplar and almond and plane" (Genesis

30:37). Shylock's tale is a story of miscegenation--ironic considering Jessica's eventual defection into the Christian camp. What is most odd about this tale of miscegenation is that it involves a female body of one color, black or white, and the desire for the rods that makes them "in the very heat of coition, [behold] the rods and [bring] forth spotted, and of divers colors, and speckled" (Genesis 30:39). Barbara Lewalski writes that "Antonio, denying the analogy . . . with the query, 'is your gold and silver ewes and rams?,' echoes the commonplace Christian argument . . . that to take interest is to "breed" barren metal, which is unnatural" (332). This "unnaturalness" may also be found in the theory of tetragensis recently explored by James Aubrey¹². The theory of tetragensis, as well as "breeding money" through interest, invite questions about the power of female desire. In *The Merchant of Venice*, desire--be it a woman's desire for a man or a man's desire for a woman--takes place in a racialized context. For example, let us examine *Merchant's* unnamed Moor, Launcelot's mistress.

The reference to Launcelot's mistress is brief, but provides striking contrast to the "othered" but "gentle" portrait of the dark-skinned Morocco. While the audience concentrates on Lorenzo's interracial relationship with Jessica and the threat of Morocco as a potential husband for Portia¹³, Shakespeare gives us a short, anxiety-provoking look at an interracial relationship between a white man of lower class and a black woman. We know that intermarriage between white men and black women carries a higher social penalty than Lorenzo's marriage to a Jew when Lorenzo says, "I

shall answer that better to the commonwealth than you can the getting up of the Negro's belly; the Moor is with child by you, Launcelot" (3.5.40). Shakespeare shows us the stereotypical vision of the sexually promiscuous black woman¹⁴, but he also carnivalizes the other interracial pairings in the play, particularly the "true love" between Lorenzo and Jessica. Launcelot's "Negro" is Jessica in the extreme, an "other" than cannot be truly assimilated. Shakespeare's use of the non-standard term "Negro," (his only use of the word in the entire body of his work)¹⁵, suggests that while Jessica's Jewishness may be seen as only a religious difference, blackness cannot be transformed into anything more desirable. However, the very presence of Launcelot's mistress and his bawdy/racist treatment of her subverts the easy resolution of racial or religious difference promised by Jessica and Lorenzo's marriage. Therefore I disagree with Boose's statement that "The Otherness of Jessica in *The Merchant of Venice* . . . is presumed to be convertible" (41). Shylock's conversion is far from a happy resolution, and of the classical allusions that Jessica and Lorenzo catalogue in the opening scene in Act 5, while all denote catastrophic pairings, at least two include the inability to assimilate the woman "other" (Dido and Medea), despite the scene's comedic purpose. Paul Gaudet recognizes the indeterminacy caused by the difference between Lorenzo and Jessica, asking "Why has Shakespeare made her final line an expression of melancholy, 'I am never merry when I hear sweet music' (5.1.69)? Why is she then silent for two-hundred and thirty-eight lines until the play's end?"(280).¹⁶ Shakespeare's deliberate and extreme racialization of Launcelot's

mistress must lead us to question "true love" in the face of difference, as does Portia's dismissal of Shylock, and later the tragedy of *Othello*.

I agree with Dorothea Kehler that "Launcelot's interracial activities . . . qualify the effect of Portia's aversion to the play's other Moor, the tawny Prince of Morocco" (27), yet I question her assertion that "the Bakhtinian servant Launcelot has demonstrated physically that racial barriers are social, not inherent. The Moor's baby will be both black and white, deconstructing the binary opposition" (28), for Shakespeare has already demonstrated his knowledge of the tenacity of black skin in the products of interracial marriage in *Titus Andronicus*, and images of miscegenation in *Othello* are far from positive deconstructions of the binary opposition of black and white, and are actually monstrous¹⁷. I agree with Kim F. Hall that

this pregnant, unheard, unnamed, and unseen (at least by critics) black woman is a silent symbol for the economic and racial politics of *The Merchant of Venice*. She exposes an intricately wrought nexus of anxieties over gender, race, religion, and economics . . . which surrounds the various possibilities of miscegenation raised in the play.
("Guess" 89)

Launcelot's mistress subverts any possibility of reconciling racial difference in *The Merchant of Venice*, particularly because the scene amplifies the racial tension brought about by the appearance of the Prince of Morocco.

Morocco's immediate disclaimer, "Mislike me not for my complexion"

(1.3.1), resonates against Launcelot's mistress, and the continuing opposition between Christian and Jew. Morocco is not only aware of his difference, but like Aaron, he revels in it: "I would not change this hue, / Except to steal your thoughts, my gentle queen" (1.3.11-12). Largely, I admit, for dramatic purposes¹⁸, but also because his color makes him particularly sensitive to "outward show," Morocco wrongly chooses the gold casket. While critics such as Boose and Hall recognize the significance of Portia's dismissal of Morocco¹⁹, few critics have explored the reasons for Morocco's failure, finding his choice simply proof of his "foolishness." Barthelemy gives us the most in depth study of Morocco's failure at the caskets, yet characterizes him as a fool. I include the entire quotation here so that I may discuss alternative motivations for Morocco's choice below. Barthelemy writes,

. . . more than Morocco's complexion casts an unfavorable light on him. His long speech before the caskets undermines any dignity he may have possessed, and his choice of the wrong casket proves him foolish. Morocco also presents an obvious and unwelcome sexual threat to Portia, and he makes known his desire for her before he chooses . . . Only by leaving immediately and quietly does Morocco maintain any honor or dignity, as his earlier professions of valor are forgotten by the relieved mistress of Belmont. (148)

Morocco's "long speech before the caskets" serves the dramatic purpose of letting the audience read the inscriptions. His "professions of valor" and desert such as

"I would o'erstare the sternest eyes that look / Outbrave the heart most daring on the earth, / Pluck the young sucking cubs from the she-bear, / Yea, mock the lion when 'a roars for prey, / To win thee, lady" (2.1.27-31), and "I do in birth deserve her, and in fortunes, / In graces, and in qualities of breeding . . ." (2.7.32-3), accomplish a two-fold purpose. Morocco's hyperbole and rich imagery contributes to the heteroglossia of the play and linguistically signifies his position as "other," as I noted in my discussion of Aaron's speech in *Titus Andronicus*.

Morocco's "over the top" portrayal of himself and his extended catalog of reasons why he "deserves" Portia are also attempts to circumvent the barrier of his color. His statement ". . . this aspect of mine / Hath feard the valiant; by my love, I swear / The best-regarded virgins of our clime have lov'd it too" (2.1.8-11), belies such anxiety on his part, an anxiety motivated by the knowledge that his skin color may put him at a disadvantage, and we see that his anxieties are not misplaced.

Morocco's misguided and thoroughly racialized choice casts aspersions on the theme of the casket plot. While we are meant to believe that "all that glisters is not gold" (2.7.65), Portia's parting words about Morocco, "A gentle riddance. Draw the curtains, go. / Let all of his complexion choose me so" (2.7.78-9) subvert this lesson. Harry Morris writes, "Clearly gold is a substance both good and evil. It forms the first vessel itself, which contains only bones, but it is the treasure of the lead casket" (299). Morocco's preoccupation with race, with outward show, with Portia's Anglo beauty leads him to conclude that "never so rich a gem / Was set in worse than gold" (2.7.54-

55). Portia's parting words reveal that the primacy of Anglo features is still firmly in place, and upset the very moral fabric of *The Merchant of Venice*.

While the Prince of Morocco is the first "gentle" Moor in early modern drama, Othello is, of course, the most widely discussed and well-known of Shakespeare's black characters, yet until recently Othello's blackness has been treated as a signifier that he will return to his previous barbarian ways, as an anti-racist proclamation, or as incidental to the play²⁰. Critics have discussed incarnations of Othello that range from allegory to metaphor and back. I agree with Greenblatt and Edward Said that Othello is very much a "textual" presence. Othello's character subverts the audience's pre-conceived notions of blackness at the same time Iago reaffirms them. While I do not go so far as to say that Shakespeare is engaged in "stereotype-busting," he does take an audience inundated with mythology on a roller-coaster ride through the pathology of racism. Greenblatt writes "Lodovico's barely punning response to Othello's fine speech--"O bloody period!"--insists precisely upon the fact that it was a speech, and that this life fashioned as text ended as text" (Renaissance 238).²¹ Edward Said's "Crisis [in orientalism]" deftly discusses the textual primacy in matters of race over "the swarming, unpredictable, and problematic mess in which human beings live" (295). I apply Said's theory to Shakespeare's *Othello* because, in much the same way that the Orientalists "create . . . the very reality that they appear to describe" (296), Iago's manipulation of the "text" of the Moor in his dealings with Othello ultimately brings about Othello's fulfillment of that stereotype. Thus the "text acquires a greater

authority, and use, than the actuality it describes" (Said 295). Greenblatt tells us that Iago appropriates the "text" of Othello with apparent ease because he "knows that an identity that has been fashioned as a story can be unfashioned, re-fashioned, inscribed anew in a different narrative: it is the fate of stories to be consumed . . ." (Renaissance 238).

The most demonstrative example of Iago's use of the "text" of the early modern concept of the Moor is his manipulation of Brabantio. In order to provoke fear and hostility, Iago uses miscegenation metaphors such as "Even now, now, very now, an old black ram / is tupping your white ewe" (1.1.89), and "you'll have you daughter covered with a Barbary horse, you'll have your nephews neigh to you, you'll have coursers for cousins, and gennets for germans" (1.1.111-113). Many considered the mixing of the races a dangerous enterprise that would produce sterile, half-human progeny. James Walvin writes in his seminal work, *Black and White: The Negro and English Society 1555-1945*, that "by a substantial and influential section of English society, miscegenation was regarded as a threat to the structure of that society" (55), largely because Elizabethan society believed bi-racial progeny would exhibit, along with a dark complexion, the "characteristics" ascribed to Africans. The mixing of the races could, if allowed to prosper, result in the "contamination" of the superior English form, intellect, and reason.

Iago's miscegenation metaphors also employ the commonly held belief in the bestial nature of the Moor: his savagery. A medical officer for the African Company

wrote that the African's "natural Temper is barbarously cruel, selfish, and deceitful . . . as for their customs they exactly resemble their Fellow Creatures and Natives, the Monkeys" (qtd. in Walvin 168). Iago tells Brabantio, "your daughter and the Moor are now making the beast with two backs" (1.1.115). Iago never refers to Othello by name in the first scene²², thus privileging the text of "the Moor," his bestial nature, and his sexual perversity, and excluding Othello the human being.

Brabantio's hegemonic bias immediately comes to the forefront, evident when he states that he would rather Desdemona had wed Roderigo (despite his absolute refusal of Roderigo's suit a mere eighty lines earlier). Brabantio's later assertion that should Othello and Desdemona's marriage escape punishment all Venice will soon degenerate to the ranks of "bond-slaves and pagans" speaks to the Elizabethan fear that miscegenation will destroy the English race. Martin Orkin suggests that Brabantio may be more concerned with Desdemona's "deception and betrayal. . . than [with] the 'inter-racial' nature of his daughter's marriage" (169), citing Brabantio's caveat, "Look to her, Moor, if thou hast eyes to see; / She has deceiv'd her father, and may thee" (1.3.292-3) as evidence, but Orkin seems to ignore the fact that Brabantio at that time has lost his battle for Desdemona, and his warning may be more of a "parting shot" than an expression of paternal grief.

According to Said, there are two situations in which humans may prefer to fall back on the "textual attitude." One situation occurs "when a human being confronts at close quarters something relatively unknown and threatening and previously distant"

(295). Othello says that Brabantio had :

. . . lov'd me, often invited me ;
 Still question'd me the story of my life
 From year to year--the battles, sieges, fortunes,
 That I have pass'd. (1.3.128-30)

Brabantio will have Othello in his home as a storyteller, or a representative of military prowess, but when a Moor marries his daughter, he feels the relationship is "gainst all rules of nature" (1.3.101). The marriage is, for Brabantio, uncomfortably "close quarters."

The "textualization" of the Moor carries authority in Shakespeare's Venice. Brabantio feels he holds this textualization in common with the community. He insists that they all will understand and vindicate his wrongs when he claims:

. . . The Duke himself,
 Or any of my brothers of the state,
 Cannot but feel this wrong as 'twere their own;
 For if such actions may have passage free,
 Bond-slaves and pagans shall our statesmen be.
 (1.2.95-99).

Despite Orkin's assertion that "although the emergency clearly dominates their thinking. . . no evidence emerges in the detail of the language to suggest that they share a hidden racist disapprobation of Othello" (169), the community responds to this

text of "bond-slaves and pagans." The Duke and senators, upon hearing that Desdemona has eloped with a Moor, reply "We are very sorry for't" (1.3.74). Ruth Cowhig states that the first senator's "parting words, 'Adieu, Brave Moor, Use Desdemona well,' while not unfriendly, reveal a superior attitude" (9). Thus, I believe it is no error to see community-wide agreement with Brabantio's privileging of the "text" of the Moor in *Othello*. This text eclipses Othello's individuality, since he is a Christian and a high ranking general (neither "pagan" nor "bond-slave"). The community here, as in most tragedies, extends to the audience as well.

According to Said, a second kind of human response to the threat of the "relatively unknown," which leads to privileging the "text" over the human reality, occurs when "the uncertainties of travel in strange parts seem to threaten one's equanimity. Many travelers find themselves saying of an experience in a new country that it wasn't what they expected" (295). Perhaps we can contribute the hegemonically biased response of the Duke and senators discussed above to the fact that Othello is not what they expected a Moor to be--he is a noble, Christian general of high rank. This short-falling expectation may be the reason why the Duke consoles Brabantio with the words, "[i]f virtue no delighted beauty lack, / Your son-in-law is far more fair than black" (1.3.289-90). This symbolic metamorphosis of skin color that the Duke attributes to Othello gives him the ability to psychologically overcome the discrepancy between Othello's character and the "text" of the Moor.

Iago's manipulation of the "text" of the Moor in his dealings with Othello

brings about Othello's change from "the specifically human detail to the general transhuman one" (Said 298). Iago's role as interpreter allows him to stir Othello's curiosity. When Iago says, "I know our country disposition well: / In Venice they do let see the pranks / They dare not show their husbands" (3.3.201-203), he plays upon Othello's racial insecurity, creating then the "lascivious Moor" (1.1.126), whose sole occupation becomes the activities of the bedroom, thus fulfilling the audience's expectations.

Iago provokes the savagery assigned to the Moor by early modern stereotypes when he uses the handkerchief as evidence of Desdemona's infidelity. The handkerchief is uniquely African, having been given to Othello by his mother. As Said's Orientalist who "does not have the means to capture [the Orient, but] does have the means to treat it, describe it, improve it, [and] radically alter it " (297), so Iago alters the "text" of the handkerchief, putting it to his own devious purposes. Upon seeing this evidence, Othello's tone changes and he roars, "Arise, *black* vengeance, from the hollow hell!" (3.3.447 my emphasis)²³. Iago has successfully created a "savage" Moor, who now equates alien savagery with his own blackness. Arthur L. Little, Jr. believes that

Othello's conviction that Desdemona would prefer Cassio cannot be sustained as evidence of Othello's prejudice against himself [his conviction] is not a reflection of his self-hatred; rather, the alleged inferiority of black to white is a cultural cliché. (310)

But Othello's blackness is not merely a matter of cultural cliché to him. When Othello says, "Her name, that was as fresh / As Dian's visage, is now begrim'd and black / As mine own face" (386-88), we know that Othello's skin color is a personal matter as well, as it must be for any minority who has been separated from his or her cultural roots. Little also maintains that "Unlike [Othello's] blackness, the bed and the handkerchief are so explicitly and frequently imaged throughout the play that they do not seem so critically elusive" (311), but his blackness is ultimately present because, as I have said, he is a black man on stage. By manipulating the early modern "text" of the Moor, and perverting the text of Othello the individual, Iago creates reality. Othello becomes "transhuman," a stereotypical Moor, rather than an individual.

Current critical opinion concerning *Othello* tends to downplay the fact of Othello's blackness, or ascribe to it unnecessarily broad metaphorical or allegorical significance. Phyllis Natalie Braxton points out that "the designation of Othello as a Moor is ambiguous" ("Othello" 8), and uses his travels and the fact that Shakespeare does not mention his homeland to indicate that "the Other is always mysterious and without clear definition. Once defined, he is no longer the Other" ("Othello" 9).

While Braxton's interpretation of Othello's blackness lends credence to his alienness, we must not forget that Othello is a play meant to be performed.²⁴ The Elizabethans, or any audience, need not know Othello's homeland in order to define him. Othello walks the stage along with a community of white characters, and his status as "Other" becomes readily apparent the moment he appears--whether represented by Richard

Burbage in blackface or Ira Aldridge. Braxton also argues that "the playwright . . . remains true to the natural order" ("Othello" 14) because Iago receives no punishment during the course of the play. But the audience knows that he *will*, given Lodovico's entreaty that the Gratiano ". . . censure . . . this hellish villain, / The time, the place, the torture, O, enforce it!" (5.2.368-9). Othello's descent into madness and his fulfillment of the "text" of the Moor reveals the expectations of the "text," not nature's lack of "poetic justice."

I attribute Othello's fulfillment of the "text" of the Moor to Said's second situation that leads humans to favor the text over the individual. The second situation, according to Said, is "the appearance of success [t]here is a rather complex dialectic of reinforcement by which the experiences of readers in reality are determined by what they have read" (296). Iago's wife, Emilia, upon hearing of Othello's accusations of Desdemona's infidelity, realizes that "[t]he Moor's abus'd by some most villainous knave" (4.2.139), yet after the murder, she uses the "text" of the Moor against Othello. Emilia cries, "O, the more angel she, / And you the blacker devil" (5.2.130-1), and, just as Iago and Roderigo do in Act I, she no longer refers to Othello by name, calling him "thou dull Moor" (5.2.224), "murdr'ous coxcomb" (5.2.232), and "cruel Moor" (5.2.249). The apparent success of the "text" of the Moor and Emilia's hegemonic bias leads her to shift the blame for Desdemona's murder to Othello's blackness as well as to Iago's machinations.²⁵

The crucial point of division between "Othello as text" and the "text of the

Moor" occurs in the dramatic space between the written word and the dramatized play. Whether in blackface or portrayed by a black actor, Othello is inescapably different, and it is that difference, when personified, that complicates the play. James Aubrey writes "even if most Londoners had seen blacks . . . the appearance on stage of a black person who spoke and felt must still have seemed remarkable" (231), as it seemed remarkable to audiences throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, especially when a black man played the role of Othello. My former student who admitted that she didn't realize that Othello was "like the black people she knew" had only the most tenuous concept of Othello's blackness. *Othello* is, in itself, a disruption of the Western canon, as evidenced by the "endless critical debates about Othello's precise skin color" (Loomba 30), and our continuing hesitance to engage Othello's literal blackness.

I sense the same kind of critical hesitance toward engaging the racialized possibilities of *The Tempest*. Caliban is now the most talked about of Shakespeare's characters, evidenced by Alden T. and Virginia Mason Vaughn's recent publication of *Shakespeare's Caliban: A Cultural History*, his frequent appearance in Jeffrey Knapp's *An Empire Nowhere*, his appropriation by several critics in Marianne Novy's *Cross-Cultural Performances: Differences in Women's Re-Visions of Shakespeare*, and in numerous critical articles. Stephen Orgel writes that the current trend toward re-fashioning Caliban "is symptomatic of a widespread critical attempt, which is prompted by the play itself, to humanize and domesticate Caliban, to rescue him from Prospero's

view of him--to succeed where Prospero has failed" (57). I believe that Caliban is as much a textualized being as Othello. Critics for over 400 years have been unable to satisfactorily categorize, describe, or situate him in the Great Chain of Being.²⁶ As a textual being, Caliban can be manipulated any which way, but as in the case of Othello, we, the critics, are the Iagos, empowered to create savagery or beauty at our will.

It is not my desire in this part of the chapter to engage in the ongoing critical debate about colonialism or anti-colonialism in *The Tempest*.²⁷ Instead, I'd like to explore the theory that Caliban is of African origin, and most likely bi-racial. Later I will discuss how Caliban, as a black character, contributes to the heteroglossia of the play, subverting any attempt to resolve *The Tempest*.

Critics agree that Shakespeare gives us four black characters: Aaron, the Prince of Morocco, Othello, and, with some prodding, Cleopatra, (later I shall argue for the inclusion of Hermia and the "Dark Lady") but Caliban's race is a subject of contention, or dismissal. Caliban is conspicuously absent from Eldred Jones' *Othello's Countrymen* and Barthelemy's *Black Face, Maligned Race*, both notable for their scrutiny of the figure of the African in early modern drama. Vaughan and Vaughan note that "*The Tempest* has several specific references to Africa," and that "marriage to an African king is somehow degrading, whatever its diplomatic advantages" (51). The Vaughans explicitly identify Caliban as African because "there are clear indications that his mother, Sycorax, was an Algerian before her banishment to the island and his birth," yet, they continue, "few commentator's have extracted from the island's relative

proximity to the Tunisian coast and Sycorax's Algerian ancestry an African Caliban" (51).²⁸ Knapp just scratches the surface of Caliban's race when he writes "Caliban's schooling ends up only imperiling his teacher's chastity, and Prospero will 'acknowledge' that 'thing of darkness' his (5.1.275-6) only after he has safely married his daughter to a white man" (239). Knapp also places Caliban's threat to Miranda in the realm of "the unfortunate loves of Aaron the Moor, Othello, [and] Cleopatra" (240). Leslie Fiedler writes that "if Shakespeare seems inclined to deny all human status to [Caliban], making him the by-blow of a demon mother, on the other hand, he insists that, on his mother's side, he was an African" (205). Orgel notes that "Caliban too, surely not coincidentally, is originally Tunisian" (56), which, if we believe with the Vaughans that "marriage to an African king is somehow degrading," we may see a sociological explanation for Caliban's status beyond his sexual threat to Miranda.

Errol Hill, who has compiled an exhaustive study of black Shakespearean actors in *Shakespeare in Sable*, staunchly believes in Caliban's whiteness:

. . . the fact that Caliban is a slave cannot be advanced as a reason for casting him alone as black. Shakespeare's text makes it clear that Caliban's mother was a foul, blue-eyed witch²⁹ . . . the fact remains that the reference is to a fair rather than a dark complexion. (109)

Hill also asserts that because Caliban is "freckled," he must be white. What Hill fails to take into account is the possibility that Caliban may be bi-racial. Caliban's acknowledged biological father is the devil--represented as black in early modern

England. And the adjective "freckled" has a range of meanings from "conniving" to "spotted."³⁰ Caliban's freckles, and his mother's "blue eyes" prove neither his whiteness nor his blackness. We may also consider Caliban's freckles in conjunction with a tale of miscegenation Folarin Shyllon reports in *Black People in Britain 1555-1833*, in which a black man believes his white wife to have been unfaithful because the child was "as fair a child to look at as any born of white parents," but upon closer examination finds that "the baby's right buttock and thigh were black as the father" (qtd. 104).³¹ This tale of "spots" as a result of miscegenation adds to the mysterious and exotic nature of Caliban. While it may be difficult to claim that Caliban is either white or black, I believe that when Shakespeare created him, Caliban became the fabled "beast with two backs," the nightmare-result of interracial couplings. Greenblatt writes that Caliban is a "dark fantasy," that "Shakespeare does not shrink from the darkest European fantasies about the Wild Man; indeed he exaggerates them: Caliban is deformed, lecherous, evil-smelling, idle, treacherous, naive, drunken, rebellious, violent, and devil-worshipping" (*Learning* 25-6). What better way to court such "dark fantasies" than to bring to life the monstrous progeny of a black witch and an unknown father?

In the same way that Shakespeare linguistically signifies Aaron's, Morocco's, and Othello's "otherness," Caliban's speech creates the heteroglossia in *The Tempest*. Although Caliban learned his "language" from Prospero and Miranda, he speaks with an "accent" -- his curses. Greenblatt says of Caliban's retort, "The red-plague rid you

/ For learning me your language" (1.2.364-5), "ugly, rude, savage, Caliban nevertheless achieves for an instant an absolute if intolerably bitter moral victory" (*Learning* 25). Whether one believes that *The Tempest* is a colonialist response to the New World or a warning to stay away from it, Caliban adds a colorful touch to the romance. Caliban, like Aaron is double-voiced. While he blisters the ears of the audience with his curses, his are the most beautiful lines in the play

Be not afeard, the isle is full of noises,
 Sounds, and sweet airs, that give delight and hurt not.
 Sometimes a thousand twangling instruments
 Will hum about mine ears; and sometime voices,
 That if I then had wak'd after long sleep,
 Will make me sleep again, and then in dreaming,
 The clouds methought would open, and show riches
 Ready to drop on me, that when I wak'd
 I cried to dream again. (3.2.135-43)

Shakespeare provides us with a character who so contradicts himself, with his "vild race" and appreciation of "sweet airs," that he defies classification. Caliban is the ultimate trickster, dodging this way and that between modes of discourse, interpreting for us the state of affairs on the island. Caliban's uncertain future, and his final utterance, "I'll be wise hereafter, / And seek for grace. What a thrice-doubled ass / Was I to take this drunkard for a god, / And worship this dull fool!" (5.1.295-298),

radiates indeterminacy because his is a desire is for clearer vision rather than for redemption on Prospero's terms in Prospero's world.

As I will discuss in the following chapters, Caliban became a significant figure for nineteenth-century women writers of color, emerging as such in the works of Frances Harper, Pauline Hopkins and Anna Julia Cooper. Today we find him in works by Derek Walcott, Gloria Naylor, and Toni Morrison. Valerie Traub notes that

Caliban's yoking of the ambivalent powers of language--the constraints and possibilities it affords to speaking subjects positioned within a symbolic order permeated with racial, gender, and class hierarchies, seems to articulate rather handily the position of African-American writers working in relation to Anglo-American traditions. (151)

Caliban's elusive racial background and his rich, diverse, language places him on the boundary between black and white discourse, between hero and villain, and master and slave.

The dynamic of racial indeterminacy takes on new dimensions when one adds to it the complexities of gender. The black woman is nearly invisible in the literature of early modern England³²; some notable exceptions include Jonson's *Masque of Blackness*, Marston's *Sophonisba*, and Webster's *The White Devil*. Shakespeare gives us two black women: Launcelot Gobbo's unnamed mistress in *The Merchant of Venice*, and Cleopatra. In this section, I will argue for the inclusion of Hermia and the "Dark Lady" as "honorary" black women in Shakespeare's works.

The nature of love, its blindness and its ability to disrupt reason and result in bad choices informs the binary opposition of "dark" and "fair" in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Critics have often conceded that Hermia and Helena are two different physical types: one small and dark, one tall and fair. Joan Stansbury suggests that "these physical differences are usually assumed to reflect physical characteristics of actors in Shakespeare's company" (57), but I believe that Hermia and Helena could be cast as near twins--Hermia's coloring only slightly darker. The amplification of Hermia's darker features into actual racial characteristics may serve to illustrate that in the myth of true love, difference is relative. Thus Hermia's blackness, as a racial characteristic, is not necessarily physical, but a text to be manipulated.

Following Puck's misapplication of "love-in-idleness," Hermia becomes an "Ethiophe" in Lysander's newly transformed eyes. Lysander insists his change of affections results from the return of his "reason" or "judgement," and asks, "Who will not change a raven for a dove?" (3.2.114), but because Lysander's defection is the product of magic, Shakespeare ironically suggests blackness can be beauty, in the lover's eyes, and that reason and judgement have little to do with love. Lysander pelts his former fiancée with racial invectives: "Away, you Ethiop!" (3.2.258), and "Out! Tawny Tartar, Out!" (3.2.262), but Hermia's reply, "I am as fair as I was erstwhile" (3.2.274), indicates that she does not take his racial invective to heart. I agree with Jay Halio that Lysander's rejection of Hermia "is notable for its dramatic irony" (141) because it calls sharply into question the black/fair , madness/reason opposition that

Shakespeare explores more fully in the sonnets. Later in the play, Theseus explicitly refers to blackness as beauty when he says, "The lover, all as frantic, / Sees Helen's beauty in a brow of Egypt" (5.1.9-10). Immediately after Theseus's speech, the reunited lovers enter the scene--perhaps to prove the Duke's words. The introduction of the black woman--the figure of the "Ethiope," and the "brow of Egypt"--invite a racialized reading of the play. (We must not forget that "fair Hippolyta," too, is an "other," who Theseus "woo'd with his sword.") Hall writes of the fair/dark opposition that "as objects of male attention, no two women can be fair at the same time. When one is 'fair' or desired, the other is almost as a matter of course 'other' or 'dark'" (181). Yet Hermia's color, or its construction, serves a more complicated purpose than to demonstrate the inherent contradictions in the objects of male desire. I agree with Peter Erickson that

In the very moment that Theseus seeks to discount 'shaping fantasies' as merely a product of 'imagination' (5.1.5,8) he indirectly recapitulates the Ethiope-Tartar image . . . Theseus' contemptuous invocation of a 'brow of Egypt' contains a reference to darkness that reminds us how the motif of color difference has been one of the play's shaping forces. (518)

As with the other characters of color I have discussed, Hermia's presence, and the physicality or construction of her skin color disrupt the dynamic of the play. Despite Puck's assertion that the performance is "no more yielding but a dream" (5.1.427-8),

in a racialized context we must wrestle with the "other" and with the kind of "color-prejudice" that Lysander and Theseus remind us is present. Can we blithely say that "appearances can be deceitful" when Shakespeare shows us one character after the other whose difference is insurmountable?

The inversion of the trope of the "fair beloved" that occurs in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* surfaces again in the "Dark Lady" sonnets³³. Boose poses a question that disturbs the long-held notion that Shakespeare's "Dark Lady" is a white brunette. In response to Crewe³⁴, Boose asks, "Why is the sonnet woman's 'black' always referred to its other connotative possibilities and never to its racial one?" (49). There is much to be gained in our understanding of Shakespeare's multiculturalism, and the importance of multicultural study, if we entertain the possibilities such questions raise. It is my contention that several of Shakespeare's "Dark Lady" sonnets, most notably 127 and 147, can be effectively deconstructed to reveal Shakespeare's complex attitude toward the binary opposition of fair and black. In Sonnet 127, beauty is the "bastard" of black, which calls into mind the "otherness," or monstrosity of blackness. Shakespeare's inversion of the trope subverts the aesthetic primacy of "fair." Sonnet 147, "My love is as a fever, longing still," depends on the opposition of health / sickness, reason/madness, and fair/black in order to create and maintain meaning, but these oppositions tend to undermine themselves within the text, ultimately destroying that meaning. Essentially, the speaker of the poem claims to have lost his reason because he has found beauty in one who is "black as hell, as dark as night" (14). The

speaker then likens this loss of reason to sickness, personifying reason as the "physician" whose "prescriptions" he ignores. In lines 6-7, when the speaker states that the physician, "Angry that his prescriptions are not kept, / Hath left [him]," using the word "prescriptions," and in suggesting that Reason could become "angry" Shakespeare undermines the idea that there exists an absolute truth, or an unassailable foundation dictating the primacy of "fair," that the speaker violates.

Shakespeare again complicates the notion of the "fair beloved" with Cleopatra. There is little need to prove Cleopatra's racial identification with Egypt, since she is described derogatorily as the "tawny front," and she claims she is "with Phoebus' amorous pinches black," but it is important to note that Cleopatra, the only clearly black woman in Shakespeare's plays, was not portrayed as black until the Civil Rights amendment enabled more black actors to audition for the role (Hill 7-8). I find Shakespeare's decision to portray Cleopatra as black revealing, given that most of his contemporaries remained faithful to the historical account of a Greek Cleopatra³⁵. Eldred Jones maintains that Shakespeare's decision to give Cleopatra "a touch of the sun" is a simple way to make her more exotic to Elizabethan audiences, and while I agree, I also believe that her color may represent a different view of the land that Elizabethans knew only through travel accounts and classical allusions. *Antony and Cleopatra* stands in marked contrast to Shakespeare's other works that feature black characters because unlike Aaron, the Prince of Morocco, and Othello, Cleopatra is in her own land, among her own, albeit conquered, people.

Cleopatra's relationship with Antony provides a new dimension to Shakespearean interracial romance. Theirs is a romance between equals, because Cleopatra enters into discourse on her own terms, and she is the mental, physical, and political equal of Antony. As does Aaron, Cleopatra is able to slide with ease between Egyptian and Roman discourse. Her repeated classical allusions demonstrate her education and her grasp of the Roman world, as does her characterization of Antony's change in mood as "He was dispos'd to mirth, but on the sudden / A Roman thought hath strook him " (1.2.82-3). The metonymic use of Egypt and Rome to stand for Cleopatra and Antony fills the play, and there is a clear division of the two cultures. Until she loses Antony's favor, Cleopatra successfully navigates between them. She uses Antony's ancestral, thus ethnic, ties to Hercules in a demonstration of her ability to straddle both worlds when she says, ". . . Look, prithee, Charmian, / How this Herculean Roman does become / The carriage of his chafe" (1.3.83-5). Cleopatra understands the ethnic bonds that powerfully link Antony to Rome when she says of Alexas, "How much unlike art thou Mark Antony! / Yet coming from him that great med'cine hath / With his tinct gilded thee" (1.4.35). She is equally able to place herself in the context of Egypt, while still intermingling Roman allusion as in ". . . O, I would thou didst; / So half my Egypt were submerged and made / a cestern for scaled snakes! . . . Hadst thou Narcissus in thy face, to me / Thou wouldst appear most ugly" (2.5.93-7). Her juxtaposition of "scaled snakes" and the image of an "ugly" Narcissus demonstrates her ability to move between two spheres.

The rift between Antony and Cleopatra, and ostensibly between Practical Rome and Indolent Egypt, reveals itself when Antony anthropomorphizes his hair colors: "My very hairs do mutiny; for the white / Reprove the brown for rashness, and they them / For fear and doting" (3.11.12-15). Only when Antony returns to Egypt from Rome and believes Cleopatra to have been unfaithful does the cross-cultural communication between them dissolve. Antony abruptly makes issue of their racial differences when he rebukes himself, "Have I my pillow left unpress'd in Rome, / Forborne the getting of a lawful race, / And by a gem of women to be abus'd / By one that looks on feeders?"³⁶ (3.13.106-9), to which she can only respond with pleas for interpretation, "O, is't come to this?" (3.13.115) and "Wherefore is this?" (3.13.122). Although I agree with Boose that "on occasions where the black woman-white male yoking occurs in the main plot, the racial narrative nonetheless remains repressed" (47), and that Cleopatra is "only by the remotest suggestion represented as being Negro" (47), those "remote suggestions" carry enough weight to undermine an empire. Cleopatra's race is the first characteristic that Philo describes to us, and is thus inextricably a part of her persuasiveness and "exotic lure" in the play, however stereotypical it may be. Cleopatra's race makes her even more formidable in the context of the play which is, perhaps, the reason why we persist today in thinking of her as white. Elizabeth Taylor's Hollywood "bronzed" 1963 appearance in *Cleopatra* as well as Claudette Colbert's portrayal in Cecil B. De Mille's 1934 *Cleopatra*, and Vivian Leigh's 1945³⁷ appearance in the film's version of Shaw's comedy *Caesar and*

Cleopatra, inform our twentieth-century ideas of Cleopatra's race. A deck of Shakespeare playing cards that sits on my coffee table, copyright 1992, reproduces Othello as noticeably black, but Cleopatra is as white as Hamlet or Juliet.

In conclusion, if we are to accurately represent Shakespeare's people of color to our students and colleagues, we must first explicitly identify them as such, and consider how they subvert, complicate, or problematize traditional interpretations of Shakespeare's plays and Sonnets. Why does Shakespeare write about so many people of color? Because the black-skinned "other" and all that he or she signifies, keeps us in a constant dialogue with our constructions of society.

Notes

¹ I use the term heteroglossia here in the Bakhtinian sense. Bakhtin defines heteroglossia [raznorecie] as "the social diversity of speech types . . . [which] permits a multiplicity of social voices and a wide variety of their links and interrelationships" (263). Heteroglossia permits the ongoing dialectic in novelistic discourse. Drama, as a genre, fits perfectly into the paradigm because it necessarily involves a diversity of speech acts. Perhaps the unavailability of Bakhtin's theory of heteroglossia is responsible for the omission of people of color from E. M. W. Tillyard's *The Elizabethan World Picture* (New York: Knopf, 1960).

² "Shakespeare: The Center of the Canon" is the title of Chapter Two of Harold Bloom's most recent publication, in which he argues that "Shakespeare and Dante are the center of the Canon because they excel all other Western writers in cognitive acuity, linguistic energy, and power of invention" (46).

³ Neill surveys the history of "racist" *Othello* criticism, yet argues that Orkin's essay goes to the extreme in its insistence on a "anti-racist" *Othello* because the modern idea of "race" had not yet surfaced in early modern England.

⁴ Frank Kermode writes that the source for *Titus Andronicus* must be the same source as for an eighteenth-century chapbook, but the source remains unidentified. He tells us that in this source "Aaron is a mere tool of the Queen, and the chapbook knows nothing of his love for the child or of his defiance at the end" ("Introduction" 1021)

⁵ I agree with Hunter that Aaron acts as a "surrogate father" to Demetrius and Chiron (325).

⁶ G. K. Hunter suggests that "the stern suppression of self in the interest of family, community, or state is certainly presented in an extreme form [in Titus], but it is the extreme form of a value-system consistently preferred in the play to objective passion or individual emotionalism" (331). Hunter maintains that we cannot thus view the actions of Titus as "barbaric," yet, in his denunciation of Aaron, Tamora, and their "family," Hunter omits Aaron's clear act of "stern suppression of self in the interest of family" when he bargains for the life of his son.

⁷ Eldred Jones points out that "although he looks like a stereotype, [Aaron'] choice of evil is deliberate . . . it shows Shakespeare's preoccupation with men rather than with types even in this early play" (54). Aaron's deliberate choice for evil makes him a departure from his predecessors.

⁸ "Ifa consists of the sacred texts of the Yoruba people, as does the Bible for Christians, but it also contains the commentaries on these fixed texts, as does the Midrash . . . For Ifa, one's sought meaning is patently obvious; it need only be read. Esu decodes the figures" (Gates, *Signifying* 10,21).

⁹ "If Ifa, then is our metaphor for the text itself, then Esu is our metaphor for the uncertainties of explication, for the open-endedness of every literary text. Whereas Ifa represents closure, Esu rules the process of disclosure, a process that is never-ending, that is dominated by multiplicity . . . Indeterminacy, then, is accounted for by

the vernacular tradition, as an unavoidable aspect of acts of interpretation" (Gates, *Signifying* 21-2).

¹⁰ See Gary Saul Morrison's article, "Parody, History, and Metaparody" (in *Rethinking Bakhtin: Extensions and Challenges* Illinois: Illinois Northwestern UP, 1989. 65-68) for a discussion of the silence of the "other" in heteroglossic texts.

¹¹ See Gates, *Signifying* (75). Here Aaron's mask allows him to move freely and deceptively between two modes of discourse.

¹² "Whether or not Shakespeare read Boiastuau, he would have recognized in this folk-theory of tetragensis a consistency with the Biblical story he cites in *The Merchant of Venice*" (Aubrey 224). Aubrey demonstrates how blackness and miscegenation can be construed as "monstrous" in early modern texts.

¹³ Hall writes, "the momentary threat posed by the Prince's wooing dispelled . . . the prince's fertility denied, Launcelot then has licence to replace him as the Moor's 'cultural partner' and to appropriate her body" ("Guess" 98).

¹⁴ Walvin discusses the perceived notion of African sexuality throughout *Black and White*. His most pointed discussion of the assumed "bestial" nature of African sexual practices is on page 163.

¹⁵ J. A. Rogers points out this phenomenon in 1952 (75). Incidentally, he also mentions that "Certain writers believe [Shakespeare] had a Negro sweetheart and that he shows clear evidence of it in his Sonnets" (171)

¹⁶ Gaudet mentions the necessity of staging to determine to what extent Jessica

is "othered" in the play.

¹⁷ See James Aubrey's "Race and the Spectacle of the Monstrous in *Othello*," p. 229.

¹⁸ "It was as inevitable that Morocco should choose the golden casket--the gold of Barbary was proverbial--as it was dramatically necessary that he should choose wrongly" (Jones 69-70). While I agree with Jones's estimation, I believe we can find a racialized explanation for Morocco's choice as well.

¹⁹ Boose asks several questions about the function of Morocco's race: "In the grouping of the three suitors who are shown choosing the caskets, if Morocco and Arragon are set up along some implied moral continuum leading up to Bassanio, is the structuring principle tacitly presupposed along the lines of skin color? nationality? religion?" (39), but she provides no answers. Hall concludes that "the Morocco scene is only the most obvious example of the exclusionary values of Belmont" ("Guess" 98), but doesn't explore the matter further.

²⁰ For more information on the critical tendency toward ignoring or underplaying the racial aspect of *Othello* and "racist" ideology in *Othello* criticism, see Neill and Orkin.

²¹ Berry exonerates Othello from his creation of identity as text, attributing it to Othello's "belief in the possibility of assimilation" (323), which, of course, Othello cannot realize.

²² Berry notes the relationship between Othello's black presence and his

"alienation," which is "the play's most striking visual effect" (318).

²³ Lemuel Johnson notes the dramatic advantages of this speech, and how the blackness of Othello amplifies it, "this cry for the forces of darkness from a thick-lipped, "sooty-bosom" is most effective theater and . . . effective self-crucifixion" (47).

²⁴ Joyce MacDonald, writing about the importance of Ira Aldridge as the first black man to play Othello in a bi-racial cast in England, notes that "his performance undid Kean's visual erasure of blackness as a locus of meaning in the play, and also challenged the relevance of the previous centuries' efforts by white actors to 'act black'" ("Acting" 232).

²⁵ Kent Cartwright sees "Emilia as audience-figure" and finds that she "perfectly captures the audience's reflexes, its utter intolerance of any of Othello's defenses, and its need to have the murder shouted from the rooftops" (165). If we are to believe Cartwright's findings, we must consider to what extent the audience responds to Emilia's racialized accusations.

²⁶ See Tillyard, chapters four and five.

²⁷ For further information about colonialist, "New World," or anti-colonialist impulses in *The Tempest*, see Knapps' *An Empire Nowhere* for an account of the debate.

²⁸ The Vaughans also note that both Philpotts' and Luce's editions of *The Tempest* argue for an African Caliban.

²⁹ Hallett Smith notes that Prospero's description of a "blue-ey'd" Sycorax is a reference to "dark circles around the eyes" (1615), a sign of pregnancy. Although he is aware of the meaning of "blue-ey'd," Hill still takes it to mean that Prospero describes a white women, disregarding the fact that Africans of any shade could very well have noticeable dark circles under their eyes.

³⁰ From the OED.

³¹ Although Shyllon refers to an article in *The London Chronicle* dated 9 September 1766, I do not think it is entirely impossible, given the widespread belief that such phenomena could occur, that Shakespeare intends Caliban's "freckles" as a bizarre racial marker that further problematizes his origins.

³² For an in-depth look at early modern portrayals of the black woman, see Boose's article about "the unrepresentable black woman."

³³ I am indebted to Elizabeth Spiller of the University of North Texas for her enlightening discussion of "the trope of the fair beloved" in *Midsummer Night's Dream* and the "Dark Lady" sonnets.

³⁴ See Jonathan Crewe's argument for a racialized reading of the "Dark Lady" sonnets, in which he ponders what would happen if, "instead of always genteelly speaking of Shakespeare's 'Dark Lady' sonnets, we could bring ourselves to call them the Black Woman sonnets" (12)?

³⁵ See Eldred Jones's *Othello's Countrymen*, pp. 82-86 for the various racial differences in early modern portrayals of Cleopatra.

³⁶ Boose notes that Cleopatra's children by Caesar and Antony are "neatly left off stage" in *Antony and Cleopatra* to avoid the disruption "Europe's symbolic order of dominance and desire," which "the black woman . . . swallows up with the signification of her body" (47). By leaving those bi-racial children out of the narrative, Shakespeare avoids the primacy of black skin in the people of interracial parentage, thus avoiding the inadvertent suggestion that Cleopatra's skin color, and thus her self, dominates Roman hegemony. I agree with Boose's assessment of Shakespeare's decision, because when Shakespeare does represent the product of a black woman / white man union, the result is the monstrous Caliban.

³⁷ I am indebted to Darrah G. Dunn for his discussion of the "glamorized" Cleopatras that have dominated film interpretations of her by white actresses.

CHAPTER 2

TWAIN'S TWINS: SHAKESPEAREAN RACIAL INDETERMINACY

IN *PUDDIN'HEAD WILSON*

This short chapter serves as a bridge between two centuries and two countries: Early Modern England and nineteenth-century America. The three women whose works I analyze in chapters 3, 4, and 5--Anna Julia Cooper, Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, and Pauline Elizabeth Hopkins share with Mark Twain a fascination with racial indeterminacy and with Shakespeare--particularly Shakespeare's black characters. Although neither of the three women I mentioned above explicitly discuss Twain or his works, (no doubt they were avoiding the controversy that followed Twain around like a swarm of flies) Harper and Hopkins clearly pay him homage with dialect, polyphonic discourse, and the redaction of Shakespearean moments in racial terms. Cooper leaves Twain out of her 1892 work *A Voice from the South*, although she doesn't hesitate to discuss several other nineteenth-century writers of racialized texts such as Stowe and Howells. Twain is conspicuously absent from the essay "The Negro as Presented in American Literature." Cooper seems to write around Twain, he appears neither in her list of writers sympathetic to the oppressed black voice (Shakespeare, Albion W. Tourgee, and Cable), nor in her scathing critique of others (Howells and Harris).

Cooper's inclusion of Tourgee and Cable seems to point to the unseen, ghostly figure of Twain. Perhaps Cooper, Hopkins, and Harper avoided Twain because his work created too much intensity--and cast too much doubt on the healing powers of Christianity.

Why include Twain in a study that focuses on Shakespeare's black characters and nineteenth-century black women's redactions of Shakespeare? The humanization and indeterminate negritude of Caliban, the amplification of features into racial "identifiers," and the re-creation of Shakespearean racial anxiety in the figure of the "tragic mulatto" that appear in Cooper, Harper, and Hopkins necessitate a brief stop at Twain's door. Pedagogically, these women's essays and novels are an essential companion piece to Twain's work, representing the inheritance of slavery from the voice of the black woman. In this chapter I argue that the "twinning" phenomenon in *Puddin'head Wilson*, including Tom Driscoll and Chambers and Luigi and Angelo Cappello, redacts the Shakespearean dynamic of racial amplification and indeterminacy found in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and the "Dark Lady" sonnets, thus paving the way to the same dynamic in the works of Cooper, Harper, and Hopkins.

Several scholars have chronicled Shakespeare's influence on Twain, including Anthony J. Berrett and James Hirsh. Berrett discusses Twain's redactions of *Othello* and their source in the minstrel show (74-79), and briefly notes Jim's resemblance to both *Othello* and *Lear*, though he refers to the first similarity as "literary stereotypes of

Negro character" (176), and the other avoids with the statement, "rather than isolate Jim as a Lear figure, it would be better to view him as part of a character axis" (173). Berrett's analysis leaves room for a much deeper probing of Twain's racialized redactions of Shakespeare in *Huck Finn*.¹

The most aggressive Shakespearean symbol of racial indeterminacy, Caliban, appears in Twain's essay "On the White Race," as he describes the newly "civilized" Kanaka who quickly divests himself of Western clothing and jewelry so that "there is but a single detail of his civilization that can be depended on to stay by him: according to the missionary, he has learned to swear. This is art, and art is long, as the poet says" (231). Twain re-creates the "New World Savage" as an oppressed figure whose curses are "exalted poesy," as Cooper describes it.² Twain is no stranger to the racial implications of Shakespeare.

Twain's redaction of the amplification dynamic in *Puddin'head Wilson* reveals the racial anxiety in nineteenth-century America³ and mirrors the tension caused by racial indeterminacy in *Midsummer* and the "Dark Lady" sonnets. For the remainder of this chapter I focus on the "twinning" phenomenon, and the Helena/Hermia/Dark Lady dynamic within that twin relationship.

The *Puddin'head* version of Luigi and Angelo Cappello presents a pair of twins whose resemblance to each other is remarkable--but the town of Dawson's Landing has little trouble telling them apart because "one was a litter fairer than the other, but

otherwise they were exact duplicates" (43). The people of Dawson's landing refer to the two as "the fair one" and "the dark one" as often as by their names. Angelo, the fair one, is a temperance man, a tee-totaller, whose righteousness becomes burlesque in *Those Extraordinary Twins*. In contrast, the dark one, Luigi, is a rum advocate convicted of assault who exults in undermining his brother and swindling the town in the comedy. It is not my wish to explore the fair = good, dark = evil dynamic in the twins, as such archetypal color schemes have been hashed over by centuries of critics. Berret's study of blackface in the minstrel show as a "satire on social distinctions and upward mobility" (76), creates room for such satire in the slight difference in the twins' complexions. Eric J. Sundquist writes that the twins "mimic both the mulatto's dilemma and the South's" (66) with their tales of "slavery," yet their presence can be more specifically tailored to the switched babies, Tom and Chambers. Angelo and Luigi are identical, but their complexions differentiate them. Tom Driscoll and Valet de Chambre (Chambers) are also identical, but the irony of contrast is that unlike the brothers born from the same body, Tom and Chambers are interchangeable as infants. The "one drop" of black blood in Tom's veins and the blue "F.F.V" blood in Chambers creates no apparent racial distinctions. The contrast between the two pairs of twins hopelessly entangles the empirically expedient master-slave relationship, clearing a space of indeterminacy on the seething and rigid color-line in the South where "codes regulating miscegenation and classifying mixed-race offspring . . . were

re-enacted or reaffirmed, with even more rigorous definitions of whiteness" after Emancipation (Gillman 197). Lee Clark Mitchell notes that Angelo and Luigi "treat each other alternately as master and slave" (302) as they share control over the body they both inhabit. Such ambivalent obscurity in the master/slave opposition ricochets off the figures of Tom and Chambers, as Luigi's attempt to assert dominance over his brother, at least in the eyes of Aunt Patsy reflect Tom's situation as dark "usurper" of the plantation throne. Michael Rogin notes that "*Puddin'head Wilson* . . . seems to return the blame for miscegenation to its origin . . . the shadowy F.F.V. double of Judge Driscoll who fathers Tom, and Tom's master, the Judge's brother, are both clearly stand-ins for the Judge" (77). Had Twain followed through with his original intention and made Judge Driscoll the father of Roxy's child, the color-line would have been even more blurred and the contrast between the Capellos and Tom and Chambers more striking because Tom and Chambers would not only have been raised by the same mother, but fathered by brothers, thus further accounting for their resemblance to one another and making the miracle of amplification (one drop = nigger) an even more strenuous feat. As I discussed in chapter one, the leap from brunette to "Ethiope" Lysander makes in disparaging Hermia creates both community (us) and alien (them) in the same presence. In the American South the "sure identifiers" of creamy skin, "negroid" fingernails, green veins, and kinky hair evidence the "one drop" of black blood that makes a "nigger" of an essentially white human being and places that person

on the auction block and at the bottom of the racial ladder. The amplification from feature to "race" in America has sinister consequences not dreamed of by Lysander, yet it defines the community and the alien in one presence as the descendant of a long line of F.F.Vs can also be a slave sold "down the river."

Jonathan Crewe, who questions our demure references to the "Dark Lady" sonnets and suggests the "Black Woman" sonnets may be more appropriate, suggests the "Dark Lady" sonnets "constitute a singularly radical attempt to conceive of the 'other,' which is also the repressed primary text, of any representation in which the White Man is explicitly or implicitly the idealized subject" (182 n4). The racialized confusion surrounding the "Dark Lady" or "Black Woman" subverts the idealized "Young Man" of the first 126 sonnets. Sonnet 127, "In the old age black was not counted fair," reveals the white male's anxiety when faced with racial indeterminacy:

But now is black beauty's successive heir
 And beauty slander'd with a bastard shame,
 For since each hand hath put on nature's power,
 Fairing the foul with art's false borrow'd face,
 Sweet beauty hath no name, no holy bow'r
 But is profan'd, if not lives in disgrace. (3-8)

While the sonnet woman's ability to "fair the foul" comes from the availability of cosmetics, the cosmetics disable the "sure identifiers," subverting the fair/dark opposition as white skin can obscure the "nigger" in Tom Driscoll.⁴

In *Puddin'head Wilson*, the title character, Judge Driscoll, the white population of Dawson's Landing, and the American South are representations of the "White Man" as "idealized subject," but Chambers inability to become "white" because of linguistic and social training to the contrary and Tom's "usurpation" makes for a shifting "repressed primary text." Scratch Tom's surface and you find a "nigger." Scratch Chamber's and you will find the same. Toni Morrison writes:

Through the simple expedient of demonizing and reifying the range of color on a palette, American Africanism⁵ makes it possible to say and not say, to inscribe and erase, to escape and engage, to act out and act on, to historicize and render timeless.

It provides a way of contemplating chaos and civilization, desire and fear, and a mechanism for testing the problems and blessings of freedom. (7)

The Africanist presence in *Puddin'head Wilson*, Roxy and Tom, creates ambivalent space on the color line and leads to the "repressed primary text" that fails to adequately define either blackness or whiteness. Lynda E. Boose notes the "Dark Lady" disrupts white male reproduction as "the very ground of difference" (49). Roxy and Tom confuse the smooth, blue-blooded racial lines in Dawson's Landing, and Roxy's decision to switch the infants, despite Wilson's later discovery, disrupts white male reproduction as a Thomas a Beckett becomes a Chambers who will never quite fit his

F.F.V pedigree. Kim F. Hall's discussion of the fair/dark opposition of desire takes on new meaning in a text where the fair and the dark are male. Hall writes, "unlike class or gender, color allows for the construction of a woman as different while not necessarily establishing differences in males" (181), and while I agree with her analysis of the Helena/Hermia opposition and recognition of Gates's "dangerous trope"⁶ at work, the color-determined rules for establishing difference between two objects of desire are extended to males in the antebellum South. In order to determine which man is desirable in *Puddin'head Wilson*, Dawson's Landing must first determine which one is black. As in any comic enterprise, (don't let the title fool you) the making of a community depends on the twin dynamic of inclusivity and exclusivity--determining who is "us" and who is "them."

Perhaps the most important aspect of the inclusivity/exclusivity dynamic is its maintenance. Slavery necessitated different quarters, clothing, and "educational opportunities" for the slave as well as theological and "biological" explanations for racial difference. These differences were rigidly kept by means of violence, rape, and various forms of mental and physical abuse to keep the blacks "in check." Tom threatens the color line because "unlike both his white and his black fellows; on the white side, he is not capable of being a master, and on the black, he has been dangerously loosed from he bonds that keep other black men in check" (Jehlen 111). When the inclusive/exclusive door swings in the wrong direction, or begins to admit

those who look like "us" but really are "them," the community must re-draw the boundaries. Lysander's "Away, you Ethiopel!" and the excessive carnality explicit in the speaker's descriptions of the "Dark Lady" verbally and textually re-establish the inclusivity/exclusivity rules, as does Puddin'head Wilson when he "translates into the rule of law at the conclusion of Twain's novel, he simultaneously reveals the hidden 'nigger,' the white man with black blood, and moves to the apex of the townspeople's values" (Sundquist 63-4). Susan Gillman writes, "For Twain the apparent precision implied by minute fractional divisions (one-sixteenth, one thirty-second) only underscores their disjunction from reality. All that counts racially in Dawson's Landing are two categories: black and white" (200). The white hegemony has been re-established, but damaged beyond repair because the specter of racial indeterminacy still haunts the door. Racial indeterminacy informs the work of Anna Julia Cooper, Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, and Pauline Elizabeth Hopkins. Cooper writes about the "race problem" from the margin of indeterminacy, pointing to inequities in American legal, social, and educational systems. Harper and Hopkins have a dozen racially indeterminate characters between them who, like Shakespeare's black characters, live on the anxiety-provoking, subversive threshold between "us" and "them."

Notes

¹ I would like to see further examination of the *Othello* presence in *Huck Finn*, as well as more generous discussions of Jim as a Lear figure. The Duke and Dauphin's burlesque of Shakespeare and their contrast to Jim necessitate more study on Twain's racialized redactions of Shakespeare in his most famous novel.

² Twain's equation of swearing with art, as we see in several of his works, works particularly well with the figure of Caliban, for whom cursing is his only means of feeling justified.

³ See Shelley Fisher Fishkin's *Was Huck Black?*, 122-3 and 197.

⁴ There is not much difference between cosmetically obscuring physical characteristics and "passing" for white when you are not. The fact that one is "covering faults" and the other suppressing racial ancestry, historically and socially a "fault" seems to ally the two phenomena rather than differentiate them.

⁵ Morrison uses the term "Africanism" to mean "the ways in which a non-white, Africanlike (or Africanist) presence or persona was constructed in the United States, and the imaginative uses this fabricated presence served" (6).

⁶ Hall refers to the following quotation from Gates:

Race has become a trope of ultimate, irreducible difference between cultures, linguistic groups, or adherents of specific belief systems which--more often than not--also have fundamentally opposed economic

interests. Race is the ultimate trope of difference because it is so very arbitrary in its application. The biological criteria used to determine 'difference' in sex simply do not hold when applied to 'race.' Yet we carelessly use language in such a way as to *will* this sense of *natural* difference into our formulations. (5)

CHAPTER 3

SHAKESPEAREAN INTERTEXTUALITY IN ANNA JULIA COOPER'S

A VOICE FROM THE SOUTH

The genres, perspectives, and personal histories, real or imaginary, are many, but the central themes persist: the search for self through language, and the ensuing quest for authentic languages of the self.

--Marcellus Blount, "The Past is Prologue," Rev. of *The Schomburg Library of Nineteenth-Century Black Women Writers*

Self-fashioning is always, though not exclusively, in language.

--Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*

Anna Julia Cooper, a woman born the daughter of a slave in 1858 who lived through the Beatles Invasion, is often described by her biographers as "an educator" because of her dedication to furthering the education of black women in America. *A Voice from the South* (1892), a collection of essays that range from indictments of women's organizations for racist membership requirements to arguments about the ability of the Anglo-Saxon writer to adequately portray the African-American in literature, has received little attention from critics. Reviewers of the *Schomburg Library* such as Marcellus Blount and Eric J. Sundquist single out *A Voice* for high praise, and while Karlyn Kohrs Campbell recognizes Cooper's work as a "contribution

to rhetorical literature" (214) only one critic, Elizabeth Alexander, engages the text itself, going beyond the biographical. Hazel V. Carby and Mary Helen Washington have made giant strides toward recovering this magnificent book and establishing it as an influential text for nineteenth-century black women writers.¹ I should also mention Louise Daniel Hutchinson's 1982 publication of *Anna J. Cooper: A Voice from the South*, which provides exhaustive biographical material as well as Cooper's correspondence and photographs from her T Street home.

Cooper is consciously stylistic, and in complete control of her essays. Henry Louis Gates Jr.'s publication of *A Voice* in *The Schomburg Library of Nineteenth-Century Black Women Writers* makes it possible for readers to experience Cooper's singular wit and rhetorical acumen.

One of the first African-American women to hold a Ph.D.,² Cooper demonstrates her extraordinary knowledge of literature in *A Voice*, by using canonical texts such as Milton's *Paradise Lost* and Bacon's *Novum Organum* to amplify her position. In this chapter, I will concentrate on Cooper's appropriation of Shakespearean themes to amplify and validate her position on the "race problem" in post-Civil War America. Cooper cites many texts in her work, quoting whole passages from Milton and other poets and prose writers, but her appropriation of Shakespeare falls into Henry Louis Gates Jr.'s definition of Signifyin(g),³ as she discursively weaves Shakespearean syntax and short, epigrammatic quotations into the work. One can posit many practical reasons why Cooper chooses Shakespeare to enhance *A Voice*

From the South, among them her vehement repudiation of the nineteenth-century belief that "Black women were . . . immoral scourges [,and] despite their achievements, they did not have the benefit of 'a discriminating judgement concerning their worth as women'" (Giddings 82). Shakespeare is also a logical source for an authoritative voice on which to Signify because many households had copies of his works. Accessibility aside, Cooper may have chosen Shakespeare for several theoretical reasons :

Shakespeare occupies a unique position in feminist thought; Cooper consciously attempts to create a "polyphony of voices" in her work; Cooper's nineteenth-century endeavor exemplifies Stephen Greenblatt's theory of "self-fashioning," anchoring her securely to the early modern period, and Cooper's knowledge of the Shakespearean canon answers Emerson's call to the "American Scholar."

Marianne Novy writes in the introduction to *Cross-Cultural Performances: Differences in Women's Re-Visions of Shakespeare* that Cooper "found the image of the sympathetic Shakespeare particularly important because it coalesced with what she maintained of the nineteenth century's ideal image of women," and in terms of racial and gender prejudice "claims Shakespeare on the side of cultural openness" (5). In the companion volume, *Women's Re-Visions of Shakespeare*, Novy suggests that Gilbert and Gubar's *The Madwoman in the Attic* "shows that one survival strategy for many women writers may have been to construct an image of one male author whose metaphorical gender, at least, was somehow not only masculine" (5)--that author, of course, is Shakespeare. According to Novy, both Shakespeare's social standing as an

actor and his cross-cultural generative abilities as a playwright combine to create an androgynous space in which female writers can free themselves from the typically androcentric voice of literary authority.

Second, Loewenberg and Bogin's editorial comment on Cooper's work speaks to Cooper's desire for diversity in literature :

Subtle, learned, and unequivocal, she made precise the conditions which deprived civilization of women's substance. Wisdom and knowledge were of diverse kinds, and the male view taken alone was a distortion. To add women's attributes, women's experience, and women's knowledge would merely complete 'the circle of the world's vision'.

(36)

Cooper reifies her demands for "unified" vision by engaging several "white" canonical texts and infusing them with her own rhetorical purpose, creating Bakhtin's "polyphony of voices" metatextually, and creating a "voice" for herself within that polyphony.

Third, I would like to explore Greenblatt's concept of "Renaissance self-fashioning" and compare Cooper's rhetorical quest to that of the early modern writers' in Greenblatt's New Historicist study. To begin, Cooper's strategy mirrors what Patrick Cruttwell describes as "the Shakespearean moment," which has an "intense feeling for a nexus, an absolute identity, between the spiritual, the political, and the personal" (268). Cooper evinces such expansive maneuvers in *A Voice from the South*,

combining her own deep religious feeling and personal experience of slavery and prejudice and matters of social and political policy with a literary smoothness that makes them inseparable. Along with such cultural similarities, Cooper's work is an instance of "Renaissance self-fashioning." Greenblatt enumerates ten "governing conditions common to most instances of self-fashioning--whether of the authors themselves or of their characters" (8-9). I will reproduce Greenblatt's conditions here, and show how Cooper emulates them in order to illustrate Cooper's "self-fashioning" and thus her connection to the early modern literary endeavor and to Shakespeare himself. For clarity, Greenblatt's words are italicized.

1. None of the figures inherits a title, an ancient family tradition or hierarchical status that might have rooted personal identity in the identity of a clan or caste. With the partial exception of Wyatt, all of these writers are middle class.

Although Cooper was born a slave, and later founded her personal identity in the identity of a "caste," the oppressed black race, her educational background and her status as an admired educator compel her transcend racial boundaries, as part of the early black middle class. Furthermore, Cooper often addresses the loss of identity inherent in the African diaspora, and her own paternity--her father was her mother's owner--leaves her no room to "inherit a title."

2. Self-fashioning for such figures involves submission to an absolute power or authority situated at least partially outside the self--God, a

sacred book, an institution such as church, court, colonial or military administration.

Cooper begins *A Voice* with "Our Raison d'Être," a declaration of submission to the metaphorical authority of American justice. She writes :

It is because I believe the American people to be conscientiously committed to a fair trial and ungarbled evidence, and because I feel it essential to a perfect understanding an equitable verdict that truth from *each* standpoint must be presented at the bar,--that this little Voice has been added to the already full chorus. The 'other side' has not been represented by one who 'lives there.' And not many can more sensibly realize and more accurately tell the weight of the fret of the 'long dull pain' than the open-eyed but hitherto voiceless Black Woman of America. (II)

Thus Cooper submits herself to a higher power, American justice, an institution that lies "at least partially outside the self" as an absolute authority, if historically negligent in racial matters.

3. Self-fashioning is achieved in relation to something perceived as alien, strange, or hostile. This threatening Other--heretic, savage, witch, adulteress, traitor, Anti-Christ--must be discovered or invented in order to be attacked and destroyed.

Cooper declares the "Other" in her "Raison d'Être" as well. Though Cooper makes

the rhetorical choice to refrain from outright disparagement of those who have co-opted the voice of the black woman, she reveals the fallacy in their attempts--discovering the ideological "Other" she confronts through the extended metaphor of American justice :

The feverish agitation, the perfervid energy, the busy objectivity of the more turbulent life of our men serves, it may be, at once to cloud or color their vision somewhat, and as well to relieve the smart and deaden the pain for them. Their voice is in consequence not always temperate and calm, and at the same time radically corrective and sanatory. At any rate, as our Caucasian barristers are not to blame if they cannot *quite* put themselves in the dark man's place, neither should the dark man be wholly expected fully and adequately to reproduce the exact Voice of the Black Woman. (III)

Thus Cooper sets out to attack and destroy skewed perceptions of the "Voice of the Black Woman," fashioning her identity in direct proportion to stripping away the inexactitude of previous presentations that Voice.

4. The alien is perceived by the authority either as that which is unformed or chaotic (the absence of order) or that which is false or negative (the demonic parody of order). Since accounts of the former tend inevitably to organize and thematize it, the chaotic constantly slides into the demonic, and consequently the alien is always constructed as a distorted image of the authority.

Cooper's essays systematically attack "distorted images of the authority" of American justice. She writes of inequities in social, political, and literary constructions and perceptions of blacks. Women's clubs, social policies about Native Americans, and the works of "white" canonical writers all create sub-systems of identity formation. Membership in organizations, policies of exclusion, and literary canonicity all create a sense of national identity--a homogeneous identity that Cooper reveals as deeply flawed. All reflect a distorted image of American justice as seen by Cooper; each deflects the "equitable verdict" she seeks.

5. *One man's authority is another man's alien.*

Cooper recognizes her egalitarian view of American justice threatens the co-opting voice of the "Other," which in turn constructs her authority as alien. In Cooper's repudiation of the racist membership requirements of Wimodaughsis, "a woman's culture club whose name is made up of the first few letters of the four words wives, mothers, daughters, and sisters" (80), she suggests that they change their name more fittingly to "Whimodaughsis" (as in *white mothers, daughters, and sisters*) and reveals the alien threat her ideology poses to the organization, saying that such a change could enable the "immaculate assembly for propagating liberal and progressive ideas [to be] spared the painful possibility of the sight of a black man coming in the future to escort [a] solitary cream-colored applicant" (82). While she recognizes that the organization favorably changed its policies regarding racial discrimination as a result of the incident, Cooper acknowledges the ubiquitous quality of racism--the impetus for such unbalanced

policies in social, political, and literary movements, referring to the incident as "only a ripple,--some bewailing of lost opportunity on the part of those who could not or would not seize God's opportunity for broadening and enlarging their own souls--and then the work flowed on as before" (83). Such is the terrifying chiasmas of authority and alienness in racialized discourse.

6. *When one authority or alien is destroyed, another takes its place.*

Here, too, the pervasive quality of racial inequity, with its history of creating flawed social, political, and literary systems comes into play. In the incident related above, the destruction of racist policies in Wimodaughsis creates inclusion in that particular sphere, but Cooper recognizes her purpose as ongoing--evidenced by the continued suppression of the voice of the black woman in twentieth-century media, politics, and literature.

7. *There is always more than one authority and more than one alien in existence at a given time.*

Cooper often turns to another authority in *A Voice*--Greenblatt's "sacred book" -- as she weaves quotations from the Bible in her narrative and questions the Christian ethics in racist policies. And while her declared "Other" is the co-opting tendencies of both whites and black men, inherent in this struggle to destroy that "Other" is the ubiquitous presence of racial prejudice. The alien can be the racist school board member, the corrupt southern politician, or the well-intentioned but wrongheaded white author who creates an imbalanced portrait of blacks. Cooper's "Other" is a collection of various

social, political, and literary camps whose symbiotic relationship creates the larger impediment to the black woman's voice.

8. If both the authority and the alien are located outside the self, they are at the same time experienced as inward necessities, so that both submission and destruction are always already internalized.

Cooper asserts her identity as a "Black Woman of the South" in the title of the book, at once creating both submission to her authority of American justice and destroying the co-opting "Other." Cooper's oft-quoted confusion when confronted with the signs "FOR LADIES" and "FOR COLORED PEOPLE," at which she found herself "wondering under which head [she came]" (96), reveals her synthesis of two radically different formations of identity, as does her inclusion of "white" canonical texts. In her egalitarian view of American justice, she is already a black woman--a "lady" of the times--whose very presence and ability to confront the "Other" internalizes and subverts its policies.

9. Self-fashioning is always, though not exclusively, in language.

Cooper's exacting command of both the English language and the language of canonical literature is a crucial part of the formation of her identity and her construction of self in opposition to the "Other." Cooper's *language* is the key to her argument, and her primary vehicle for confronting the "Other." Her redaction of Shakespearean characters and themes enlarges and infuses her own perception of self.

10. The power generated to attack the alien in the name of the authority

*is produced in excess and threatens the authority it sets out to defend.
Hence self-fashioning always involves some experience of threat, some
effacement or undermining, some loss of self.*

In the introduction to *A Voice from the South*, Mary Helen Washington writes of Cooper's distance from the very people she intends to speak for :

The feminist essays that comprise the first half of *A Voice from the South* are extremely compelling for contemporary readers. And yet I must confess to a certain uneasiness about Cooper's tone in these essays, a feeling that while she speaks *for* ordinary black women, she rarely, if ever, speaks *to* them. I find myself wondering how Cooper imagined the relationship between herself, an articulate, powerful speaker and writer--an intellectual--and the woman she describes as a 'mute and voiceless note,' 'the sadly expectant Black Woman.' Clearly, she sees herself as the *voice* for these women, but nothing in her essays suggests that they existed in her imagination as audience or as peer. (xxx)

Washington goes on to explore the difficult position of the intellectual black woman who must "construct a narrator who [is] aware of the plight of uneducated women but [is] clearly set apart from them in refinement, intelligence, and training" (xxx), but she seizes on the loss of identity inherent in Cooper's enterprise. I do not mean to suggest that a black woman loses her "blackness" by becoming a scholarly agent--I damn myself to say so--but I do believe Cooper's distance from the "mute and voiceless" population

for which she speaks creates the very loss of self resulting from self-fashioning as described above. Cooper's engagement in "Renaissance self-fashioning" creates distance from the authority and the "Other." Finally, to firmly root Cooper in the scholarly and literary traditions of the American nineteenth century, I note that Cooper answers Emerson's call to "The American Scholar." Emerson writes :

The next great influence into the spirit of the scholar is the mind of the Past,-- in whatever form, whether of literature, of art, of institutions, that mind is inscribed. Books are the best type of influence of the past, and perhaps we shall get at the truth, -- learn the amount of this influence more conveniently, -- by considering their value alone. (189)

Far from being the "bookworm" of Emerson's essay, Cooper's scholarly approach to her subject allows her to redact the great books of the "Past" and come to her own "truths" through those redactions.

For the remainder of this chapter, I will explore Cooper's redaction of Shakespearean characters and themes as a means of providing authority and identifying and destroying the co-opting "Other."

Cooper pre-dates Harold Bloom's recent assertion that "there is a substance in Shakespeare's work that prevails and that has proved multicultural, so universally apprehended in all languages as to have established a pragmatic multiculturalism around the globe" (62) when she writes, "It was Shakespeare's own all-embracing sympathy, that infinite receptivity of his, and native, all-comprehending appreciation,

which proved a key to unlock and open every soul that came within his radius" (114).

Cooper redacts Shakespeare's characters and themes in three significant ways. To define the "worth" of man and womankind, she appropriates *Hamlet*. To minimize the racial fears of the post-Civil War Southerner, she redacts the character of Bottom in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Finally, she elevates the figure of Caliban from *The Tempest*, constructing him as a trope of the eloquent slave.

In the first of the eight essays that make up *A Voice from the South*, "Womanhood: A Vital Element in the Regeneration and Progress of a Race," Cooper draws upon one of Hamlet's many definitions of man :

All I claim is that there is a feminine as well as masculine side to truth; that these are related not as inferior and superior, not as better and worse, not as weaker and stronger, but as complements--complements in one necessary and symmetric whole. That as the man is more noble in reason, so the woman is more quick in sympathy (60).

Here Cooper works within the discursive paradigm of *Hamlet*, and we must not forget that Shakespeare's passage that begins with "What a piece of work is man" (2.2.303) ends with ". . . yet to me what is this quintessence of dust? Man delights not me--nor women either . . ." (2.2.308-10).⁴ Cooper brings to her work a sense of Hamlet's obsession with humanity, tempered with a desire for masculine and feminine unity--a quality damned to decay in Shakespeare's play.

But Cooper doesn't leave Hamlet's speech to resonate doubt. She takes up the

same matter in the essay "What Are We Worth?," in which she delineates the importance of education in the objective evaluation of a human being. Cooper refers to education as "a heavy investment [that] requires a large outlay of money on long time and large risk, no end of labor, skill, pains" (244). Cooper makes Hamlet's speech the cornerstone of the following argument :

The value of the raw material was far below zero to begin with; but this 'quintessence of dust' has become, *through labor*, 'the beauty of the world, the paragon of animals, -- noble in reason and infinite in faculty!'

What a piece of work, indeed! (244).

Cooper appropriates Shakespeare's use of asyndeton to a different purpose. She creates a sense of rising mental action, perhaps even of euphoria, by re-fashioning Shakespeare's prose. When she ends the passage with "What a piece of work is man!," yet begins with "this quintessence of dust," she omits the ominous, "and yet," and frees her work from Hamlet's perennial gloom.

She employs similar methods when she appropriates Hamlet's self-deprecatory statement, "What is a man, / If his chief good and market of his time / Be but to sleep and feed? a beast, no more" (4.4.33-5).⁵ Cooper again makes rhetorical use of asyndeton, culminating in Hamlet's words, to create a sense of rising euphoria when speaking of the black population's need for higher education :

There are other hungerings in man besides the eternal all-subduing
hungering of his despotic stomach. There is the hunger of the eye for

beauty, the hunger of the ear for concords, the hungering of the mind for development and growth, of the soul for communion and love, for a higher, richer, fuller living--a more abundant life! And every man owes it to himself to *let nothing in him starve for lack of the proper food.*

'What is man,' says Shakespeare, 'if his chief good and market of his time be but to sleep and feed!' Yet such slavery as that is the settled lot of four-fifths of the laboring men of the Southland. (257-8)

Just as she adapts Hamlet's discourse to her own purposes, she uses Bottom's histrionics to minimize the fears of the "genteel" white Southern gentleman. Cooper writes:

Now I believe there are two ideas which master the Southern white man and incense him against the black race one is personal and present, the fear of Negro political domination. The other is for his posterity--the future horror of being lost as a race in this virile and vigorous black race. Relieve him of this nightmare and he becomes 'as gentle as the sucking dove'. (219)

Cooper takes this quotation from Bottom's absurd request to play every part in the mechanical's production of *Pyramus and Thisbe*. Upon offering to "roar, that [he] will do any man's heart good to hear [him]" (1.2.70-1), and being warned of frightening the ladies present, Bottom promises "I will aggravate my voice so that I will roar you as gently as any sucking dove; I will roar you and 'twere any nightingale" (1.2.81-4).⁶

Cooper accuses the Southern gentleman of exaggerating his fears, suggesting that he take "a sedative for the excited nerves, and then a mental tonic to stimulate the power of clear perception and truthful cerebration" (219-220). Allying the "monomaniacal" fears of the Southern gentleman to Bottom's pitiful demonstration of his dramatic skills enhances Cooper's argument. We can infer from this alliance that the idea of a massive, vengeful, political uprising of blacks in the South is as ridiculous as a lion-masked buffoon frightening the ladies of the court.

Finally, Cooper elevates the character of Caliban from *The Tempest*. Cooper's mention of Caliban is brief, yet intriguing. In the essay entitled "One Phase of American Literature" she charges several American writers, most notably W.D. Howells, with perpetuating unfair stereotypes of black people, and bemoans the literary silence of the black slave. Cooper writes :

Imported merely to be hewers of wood and drawers of water, no artist for many a generation thought them worthy the sympathetic study of a model. No Shakespeare rose to distil from their unmatched personality and unparalleled situations the exalted poesy and crude grandeur of an immortal Caliban. (178)

Cooper logically allies Caliban to the slave, but more interestingly, she suggests, by association, that Caliban is a person of color. Critics agree that Shakespeare gives us four black characters: Aaron the Moor, the Prince of Morocco, Othello, and Cleopatra,⁷ but Caliban's race is a subject of contention. Caliban is conspicuously

absent from Eldred Jones' *Othello's Countrymen* and Anthony Girard Barthelemy's *Black Face, Maligned Race*, both notable for their scrutiny of the figure of the African in Early Modern Drama. Errol Hill, who has compiled a history of black Shakespearean actors in *Shakespeare in Sable* concludes that

the fact that Caliban is a slave cannot be advanced as a reason for casting him alone as black. Shakespeare's text makes it clear that Caliban's mother was a foul, blue-eyed witch . . . the fact remains that the reference is to a fair rather than a dark complexion. (109)⁸

Hill also believes that because Caliban is "freckled," he must be white. What Hill fails to take into account is the possibility that Caliban may be bi-racial. Caliban's acknowledged father is the devil--represented as black in Early Modern England. And the adjective "freckled" can mean "spotted" or "conniving."⁹ Caliban's "freckles" and his mother's blue eyes prove neither his whiteness nor his blackness. Hill does point out that "when the establishment theater slowly began to overcome its opposition to interracial casting in Shakespeare, Caliban was one of the first roles offered to black actors" (108). Leslie Fiedler skirts the issue of Caliban's race by suggesting that "if Shakespeare seems inclined . . . to deny all human status to the single aborigine of the isle, Caliban, making him the by-blow of a demon mother, on the other hand, he insists that, on his mother's side, he was an African" (205).¹⁰

Caliban has often been cited as a victim of colonialism,¹¹ which may have made him an easy choice for Cooper who "identified the intimate link between internal and

external colonization, between domestic racial oppression and imperialism" (Carby, "Quiet" 101). Hazel V. Carby alludes to Caliban when discussing the "self-restrained" anger nineteenth-century black women intellectuals, "For it is not in the nature of Caliban to curse; rather, like Caliban, the black woman has learned from the behaviour of her master and mistress that if accommodation results in a patronizing loosening of her bonds, liberation will be more painful" ("Threshold" 302). As many twentieth-century Third World writers are now doing, Cooper assigns a dignity to Caliban that was almost unheard of in the body of Shakespearean criticism in the nineteenth century.¹² Cooper focuses on Caliban's "exalted poesy" and "crude grandeur," recognizing Caliban's eloquence with the language learned from his master. Indeed, Caliban speaks some of the most beautiful lines in *The Tempest* :

Be not afeard, the isle is full of noises,
 Sounds, and sweet airs, that give delight and hurt not.
 Sometimes a thousand twangling instruments
 Will hum about mine ears; and sometime voices,
 That if I then had wak'd after long sleep,
 Will make me sleep again, and then in dreaming,
 The clouds methought would open, and show riches
 Ready to drop upon me, that when I wak'd
 I cried to dream again. (3.2.135-143)

Such eloquence from the mouth of a "savage," or "thing of darkness," who has

erstwhile shown nothing but contempt for his enslaved state furthers Cooper's argument for the higher education of blacks. Caliban's capacity for beautiful utterance, combined with his enforced savagery makes him the trope of the eloquent slave.

Cooper ignores Caliban's past attempt to rape Miranda, and, most significantly, the derogatory labels put upon him by Miranda and Prospero,¹³ to amplify her claim that blacks have been unfairly treated by many white authors. She applauds Shakespeare's ability to give poetry to a savage as "glad sweet carolling" (181), while condemning those of her countrymen who

with flippant indifference have performed a few psychological experiments on their cooks and coachmen, and with astounding egotism and powers of generalization positively bewildering, forthwith aspire to enlighten the world with dissertations on the racial traits of the Negro. (186)

Anna Julia Cooper's is a powerful but little-heard voice in American literature. Cooper's use of literary pastiche, her redaction of Shakespeare in the essays that comprise *A Voice From the South*, and her singular identification of the role of blacks in literature makes her a necessary counterpart to her contemporaries such as Whittier, Emerson, and James. In teaching our students this powerful book, we will bring to them a wider picture of nineteenth-century American literature--one in which a plethora of voices struggle against the prevailing works of the age. Cooper's articulation of the black female voice provides useful accompaniment to Twain's Roxy from *Puddin'head Wilson* and the works of Joel Chandler Harris. Cooper also informs the writing of

novelists such as Pauline Elizabeth Hopkins, Frances E. W. Harper, and Anne Plato, all black women whose voices have been all but exterminated in our determination to codify and canonize this diverse period in American literary history.

Notes

¹ Perhaps the most revealing example of critical engagement with Anna Julia Cooper is Frances Richardson Keller's 1988 translation of Cooper's *Slavery and the French Revolutionists (1788-1805)*. While Keller admits Cooper's scholarly abilities, statements such as "though she was the mulatto descendant of African and American forbears, Cooper wrote as an historian seeking universal meaning" (20), highlight the problematic position of recovered black writers. No one says of Walt Whitman, "though both of his parents were *white*, he wrote as a poet seeking universal meaning."

² Mary Helen Washington, in the introduction to *A Voice*, writes "Cooper defended her dissertation in the spring of 1925 and was awarded a doctorate from the University of Paris. At the age of sixty-seven, she was the fourth American black woman to receive a Ph. D" (Introduction xxxix).

³ Gates gives many definitions of Signifyin(g) in *The Signifying Monkey*. I find the following the most useful :

Signifyin(g) is the black rhetorical difference that negotiates the language user through several orders of meaning. In formal literature, what we commonly call figuration corresponds to Signification the originality of so much of the black tradition emphasizes refiguration, or repetition and difference, or troping, underscoring the foregrounding of the chain of signifiers, rather than the mimetic representation of a novel content. (79)

⁴ Hamlet thus circuitously reveals the reason for his "affliction" :

I will tell you why, so shall my anticipation prevent your discovery, and your secrecy to the King and Queen moult no feather. I have of late--but wherefore I know not--lost all my mirth, forgone all custom of exercises; and indeed it goes so heavily with my disposition, that this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory; this most excellent canopy, the air, look you, this brave o'erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire, why, it appeareth nothing to me but a foul and pestilent congregation of vapors. What a piece of work is a man, how noble in reason, how infinite in faculties, in form and moving how express and admirable in action, how like an angel in apprehension, how like a god! The beauty of the world; the paragon of animals; and yet to me what is this quintessence of dust? Man delights not me--nor woman neither, though by your smiling you seem to say so.

(2.2.293-310)

- ⁵ Hamlet resolves himself to vengeance with the following lines:

How all occasions inform against me,
 And spur my dull revenge! What is a man,
 If his chief good and market of his time
 Be but to sleep and feed? a beast, no more.
 Sure He that made us with such large discourse,
 Looking before and after, gave us not

That capability and godlike reason

To fust in us unus'd. (4.4.32-39)

⁶ After offering to play all the other parts of "Pyramus and Thisbe," Bottom volunteers to play the lion :

Snug. Have you the lion's part written? Pray you, if it be, give it me, for I am slow of study.

Quin. You may do it extempore, for it is nothing but roaring.

Bot. Let me play the lion too. I will roar, that I will do any man's heart good to hear me. I will roar, that I will make the Duke say, "Let him roar again; let him roar again."

Quin. And you should do it too terribly, you would fright the Duchess and the ladies, that they would shriek; and that were enough to hang us all.

All. That would hang us, every mother's son.

Bot. I grant you, friends, if you should fright the ladies out of their wits, they would have no more discretion but to hang us; but I will aggravate my voice so that I will roar you as gently as any sucking dove; I will roar you and 'twere any nightingale. (1.2.66-84)

⁷ Of course, we persist in thinking of Cleopatra as white--helped by actresses such as Elizabeth Taylor and Claudette Colbert--but several critics, including Eldred Jones, Lynda E. Boose and Kim F. Hall recognize Cleopatra as a black woman.

⁸ Hallett Smith's notes for *The Tempest* in the Riverside edition note that Prospero's description of "blue-eye'd" Sycorax is a reference to "dark circles around the eyes" (1615), a sign of pregnancy. Although he is aware of this meaning of "blue-eye'd," Hill still insists that Prospero describes a white woman, disregarding the fact that Africans of any shade could very well have noticeable dark circles under their eyes.

⁹ From the OED.

¹⁰ Alden T. and Virginia Mason Vaughan note that both Philpotts' and Luce's edition of *The Tempest* argue for an African Caliban. The Vaughans also note that few critics have taken Caliban's African heritage into consideration. (Alden T. and Virginia Mason Vaughan, *Shakespeare's Caliban: A Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1991) 51-52.

¹¹ For further information about colonialist, "New World," or anti-colonialist impulses in *The Tempest*, see Jeffrey Knapp's *An Empire Nowhere: England, America, and Literature from Utopia to The Tempest*. (Berkeley: U of California P, 1992).

¹² Until recently, critics have remained faithful to Prospero's unflattering description of Caliban. Current trends show a tendency to "humanize" Caliban.

¹³ Prospero calls Caliban "Thou poisonous slave, got by the devil himself" (1.2.319), among other nasty epithets, and Miranda's scathing "Abhorred slave, / Which any print of goodness will not take, / Being capable of all ill!" (1.2.352-4) seems so nasty that some editors give Prospero the speech.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE CALIBANIC QUADRANGLE IN FRANCES E. W. HARPER'S

IOLA LEROY: OR, SHADOW'S UPLIFTED

Caliban is the quintessential figure of indeterminacy in Western literature. Centuries of illustrations of him range from hydrocephalic fish-monster to black militant, and in *The Tempest* Caliban's psychological shape-shifting renders the reader's attempts to classify him impotent. We cannot quite identify his race, his disposition, or even his physical form. As we saw in chapter one, Caliban occupies a particularly complex space in the works of African-American writers, who systematically re-create him as a localized symbol of racial and linguistic tensions. In this chapter I investigate the Calibanic Quadrangle, my term for a pervasive paradigm in nineteenth-century African-American women's fiction originating in *The Tempest*, as it appears in Frances E. W. Harper's *Iola Leroy*. I envision this paradigm as a quadrangle because the relationship between characters is lateral, in that they rarely intersect romantically or sexually, yet complex master/slave, father/daughter connections create continuously evolving and self-destructing clashes between the same four figures: Caliban, Prospero, Miranda, and Ariel. The Calibanic Quadrangle consists of a Caliban figure, a black man or "tragic mulatto,"¹ struggling within a

hostile environment ruled by a Prospero figure, the wielder of "white magic" who controls reproductive laws and racial hierarchy. The Miranda figure, who is associated with the womb and threatened by the specter of miscegenation, attends the Prospero figure and perpetuates the hostile environment. Complementing the Caliban figure is an Ariel figure, graceful and ethereal, usually the "tragic mulatta" and a slave who wants her freedom. Some Americanists may feel the Calibanic Quadrangle a passive rehearsal of a Shakespearean paradigm, but many African-American women accomplish good ideological and cultural work by infusing the uniquely nineteenth-century plea for equitable race relations with powerful Shakespearean blood. The Calibanic Quadrangle provides Shakespearean ethos to the sentimental structure of the novel and reveals the underlying racial tension in nineteenth-century American attempts to draw rigid racial boundaries. The Calibanic Quadrangle allows the black woman writer to depict colonial oppression, feared sexual aggression from the "Other," the division between early white and black women's issues, and the enduring innocence and goodness of the progressive black female character, all within the legitimated boundaries of the Shakespearean text.

Harper relates stories of lost mothers, tyrannical or misguided masters, racial indeterminacy, the inhumanity of slavery, innocence in captivity, and loyalty to absent family members with the Calibanic Quadrangle. Of course, it is possible to explore all of these themes independently of Harper's Shakespearean source, but knowledge of the Calibanic Quadrangle will enable us to understand these themes as part of a single ideological thrust-- Caliban's redemption is the redemption of an entire race.

Prospero's fall is the failure of celebrated Western humanist ideology to embrace the monstrous "Other." The plot as plot, therefore, activates different components of the Quadrangle, allowing me to narrate the plot in Shakespearean terms.

Harper begins *Iola Leroy* on a southern plantation in the middle of the Civil War. Robert, a white-looking young slave communicates news about the Union army's progress by means of agrarian symbols, i.e. if the eggs and butter are fresh, the Union is winning, if they are rancid, the Union is losing. The slaves plot to run away and aid the Union army. Uncle Daniel elects to remain on the plantation to fulfill an old promise, Ben Tunnell complains about his wife "Mirandy" who left him for "easy living" with a white man, and Tom Anderson proposes to liberate a young mulatta who looks white, Iola Leroy, who has been fighting off her master's advances. Several of the slaves escape to the Union army. Robert Johnson joins a black regiment and Iola becomes a nurse. Both befriend Dr. Gresham, who falls in love with Iola, but then learns that she is not white.

Iola remembers her mother, Marie, and sister, Grace, both overcome by grief after the death of Eugene Leroy, her white master/father. Iola's uncle, Alfred Lorraine, seizes his brother's assets and makes Eugene's marriage to Marie invalid. Lorraine tricks Iola into returning to her father's plantation, sending an emissary who makes unwelcome sexual advances to her. Iola's young sister Grace dies of grief and fever, and Lorraine sells Iola and her mother to different masters, but is unable to discover her brother Harry's whereabouts.

Iola recalls her years at a northern boarding school where, ignorant of her

heritage, she championed the cause of slavery, and, in the present-day, she rejects Dr. Gresham's proposal of marriage because he wants to hide her racial identity.

Robert visits his former mistress, Miss Nancy, whose life is now full of hardship, and at a prayer meeting, Robert finds his mother. Iola is reunited with her mother and brother and attempts to join the work force, only to be terminated repeatedly when she reveals her race until she finds a sympathetic employer. Dr. Gresham and Dr. Latimer, another white-looking mulatto, discuss the "race problem" with Dr. Latrobe, a staunch anti-amalgamation Southern gentleman who champions the "natural superiority" of the white race. Latrobe admires Latimer's intelligence, and warns him against associating too closely with "the negro," and then, to his chagrin, learns Dr. Latimer's race. Iola falls in love with and marries Dr. Latimer.

In Harper's *Calibanic Quadrangle*, the Prospero figures are Eugene Leroy, Alfred Lorraine, "Marse" Johnson, Gundover, Dr. Gresham, and Dr. Latrobe. These men are "white" magicians who control reproduction and racial boundaries as Prospero controls Miranda's womb. In order for Prospero to maintain his control over the natural world, the island, he must control procreation. When Prospero surrenders his books, the source of his power, he surrenders his role as creator and allows Miranda and Ferdinand to marry, permitting them to procreate and meet the goals of comedy.

Prospero is a creative force, conjuring up the tempest and various spirits, and orchestrating the plot through his magic. Prospero can conjure the specters of Juno, Ceres, and Isis; but he cannot sustain them--thus his cautionary expressions, "Sweet now, silence! / Juno and Ceres whisper seriously; / There's something else to do. Hush

and be mute, / Or else our spell is marr'd" (4.1.124-7). Because he can only traffic in imitations of life, he exercises control over reproduction, zealously guarding Miranda's virginity. Miranda is a vessel. Through possession of her womb, the only available means for procreation, these male characters plot control over the island. Prospero alone successfully controls that womb, finally making a gift of it to his future son-in-law.

Prospero foils Caliban's attempt to procreate and thus rule the island. Caliban reveals his rationale for the attempted rape when he says, "Thou did'st prevent me; I had peopled else this isle with Calibans" (1.2.350-1). Prospero is no doubt motivated by fatherly concern for his daughter's welfare, but in preventing the procreation of the island's one native he asserts his power over nature and reproduction, and thus ensures his rule over the island.

After having tested Ferdinand's love, Prospero makes him a gift of his daughter, but does so with emphasis on her reproductive abilities:

Then, as my gift, and thine own acquisition
 Worthily purchas'd, take my daughter. But
 If thou dost break her virgin-knot before
 All sanctimonious ceremonies may
 With full and holy rite be minister'd
 No sweet aspersion shall the heavens let fall
 To make this contract grow (4.1.13-19)

These "full and holy rites" are to take place in Naples. Miranda's marriage sharply

contrasts the other marriage in the play: the union of the king of Naples's daughter and the black king of Tunis. We know the interracial marriage is not a cause for celebration as Sebastian tells Alonso: "Sir, you may thank yourself for this great loss, / That would not bless our Europe with your daughter, / But rather loose her to an African, / Where she, at least, is banished from your eye, Who hath cause to wet the grief on't" (2.1. 124-128). This contrast highlights the "racial" difference between Caliban and Miranda. When Prospero leaves the island, he throws away his books and his power over reproduction so that "his issue / Should become kings of Naples" (5.1.205-6), and relinquishes ownership of the coveted womb to Ferdinand, the safe, white husband. Prospero's grandchildren will assuredly look like Prospero.

In the Calibanic Quadrangle, the Prospero figure can be tragically flawed or perfectly horrid. Eugene Leroy, Mr. Johnson, and Dr. Gresham fall into the first category because they temper their humanist tendencies with racial anxiety: Gresham wants Iola to hide her race, Eugene Leroy manumits his wife but not his other slaves to avoid public disapproval, and Johnson treats his slaves with "kindness." Prospero is Janus-faced--a property that allows Harper (and other writers) to split the Prospero figure into two distinct types. Jeffrey Knapp writes of Prospero's "dualist distraction . . . figured in the separate persons of Ariel as airy expansiveness and Caliban as earthy limitation" (228). Leroy, Johnson, and Gresham represent the expansive Prospero: the giver of undeserved grace. Gundover and Latrobe embody Prospero's deceit, cruelty, and tyranny over the other inhabitants of the island.

John Mebane writes, "On one level of the play Prospero's magic orders the

vital forces of nature so as to make them fruitful rather than destructive" (176). While I disagree with his theory that Prospero "has brought his soul into harmony with the cosmic order" (176), Prospero's interest in "fruitful" rather than "destructive" forces is a significant motivation. Dr. Gresham's telling reply upon hearing of Iola's race, "What you tell me changes the whole complexion of affairs" (58), and his answer to Iola's question, "suppose we should marry, and little children in after years should nestle in our arms, and one of them show unmistakable signs of color, would you be satisfied?" (117) is a flush and "irresolution in his face." Both of Gresham's responses reflect Prospero's desire to control reproduction and avoid miscegenation. Like Prospero, Gresham wants to ensure that his genes survive him, as long as they undergo no significant alterations in color and style. In contrast, Dr. Latrobe reacts more violently to the idea of interracial sexual relationships, conveniently forgetting that amalgamation was the economic tool of the master in the slave system. Upon hearing Dr. Gresham's suggestion that "I sometimes think that the final solution of this question will be the absorption of the negro into our race" (228), Latrobe "vehemently" exclaims, "Never! never! It would be a death blow to American civilization" (228). I argue that Latrobe's outburst comes from the idea of black male/white female relations and the legitimate offspring these relations would produce--the locus of anxiety in the Prospero/Caliban relationship. I argue thus because Latimer has already discussed the fact of widespread white male/black female amalgamation, "your children nestle in their bosoms" (227), and a brief history of black male/white female marriages follows Latrobe's "vehement" response. Perhaps Prospero also subscribes to the law that "the

child follows the condition of the mother," which could enable the alarming possibility of having a "thing of darkness" (5.1.275) for a grandson rather than a servant.

Like Prospero, Gundover and Eugene Leroy are conscious of their wrongful usurpation of the rights of others, and show some moral discomfort. Francis Barker and Peter Hulme suggest that Prospero's "perturbation" during the masque "represents his disquiet at the irruption into consciousness of an unconscious anxiety concerning the grounding of his legitimacy, both as producer of his play and, *a fortiori*, as governor of the island" (202). Gundover pales when Minister Parker asks him to consider Judgement Day, saying, "For God's sake don't speak of the Day of Judgement in connection with slavery" (137). Eugene Leroy gives several reasons for not freeing his slaves and insists that his children remain ignorant of their blackness, but a "shadow" of conscience "flits over his face" when he hears that a neighbor had called Harry "a nigger" (81).

Eugene Leroy, Alfred Lorraine, Johnson, Gresham, and Latrobe all share Prospero's perceived power to define those around him. John Salway writes:

Particularly notable is the extent to which Prospero's voice and language determine the history and identity of all on (and, for that matter, off) the island. He defines Miranda's past for her, tells Ariel about Sycorax and Caliban (since Ariel evidently 'forgets' his own history) and then frames the entrance of Caliban with a series of sneers and insults. The one 'alternative' history we hear is, of course, that of Caliban himself. (112)

Just as Prospero creates history and identity for the other inhabitants of the island, the

diaspora that resulted from slavery in the United States (and subsequent efforts to justify its practice) produced an entirely different history for black people. The Prospero figures in *Iola Leroy* rewrite or offer to rewrite the histories of those blacks they own or interact with. Dr. Gresham wants to rewrite Iola's history so he can marry her. Eugene Leroy tells Marie that he does not "feel the least disdain for our children on account of the blood in their veins; but [he does not] want them to grow up under the contracting influence of this race prejudice" (83), his justification for keeping the secret from them. He constructs for them a "white" history. Eugene's cousin Alfred Lorraine convinces a judge to rule Marie's marriage to Leroy unlawful, thus changing her history from wife to mistress and making her children both bastards and slaves owned by their father.

Mr. Johnson exacts a promise of loyalty from Uncle Daniel, compelling the slave to look after the plantation in his absence. Uncle Daniel and Aunt Linda attribute their unwillingness to run away to "forgiveness;" but by instilling in Uncle Daniel a sense of familial duty without the right of manumission, Mr. Johnson's kindness falls flat, and he denies Daniel the chance to escape slavery by figuring him as "almost family."

Dr. Latrobe rewrites the history of all former slaves when he attempts to justify the "peculiar institution":

You speak . . . as if we had wronged the negro by enslaving him and being unwilling to share citizenship with him. I think that slavery has been of incalculable value to the negro. It has lifted him out of

barbarism and fetich [sic] worship, given him a language of civilization, and introduced him to the world's best religion. Think what he was in Africa and what he is in America! (225)²

Latrobe's repetition of a long-cherished argument concerning the benefits of slavery on the slave echoes Prospero and Miranda's criticism of Caliban's resistance to their teachings. Latrobe's insistence that slavery gave the slave "a language of civilization" sounds curiously like Prospero and Miranda's claim that Caliban had no language before their arrival.

Prospero's teachings filter down to his one compliant pupil: Miranda. Although scholars disagree on whether or not Miranda's vehement repudiation of Caliban (1.2.351-362) should actually be Prospero's speech, the very fact that we cannot establish the true speaker demonstrates Miranda's compliance with Prospero's machinations. Miranda is something of a sacred cow in western literature. Her famous "O Brave new world!" seems to have endeared her to generations of critics--even some feminist critics who fail to see the pervasive role she plays in the colonialist discourse of oppression in *The Tempest*. The maintenance of Miranda's womb is vital to Prospero because Miranda will pass on to her children not only her father's genes, but also his prejudices. In the Calibanic Quadrangle, Miranda no longer enjoys her ingenue status; instead she represents the dangerous woman who, as mother and teacher, passes the seeds of hostility from mother to child. The Miranda figure in the Calibanic Quadrangle is an educated, favored woman, usually white, or a "tragic mulatta," who either does not know or denies her origins.⁴ Because the Prospero

figure closely guards her womb and the progeny that might come from it, she often lives in isolation. The Miranda figures in *Iola Leroy* are Marie, pre-slavery Iola, and "Miss Nancy." Just as Miranda once "petted" Caliban and then feels revulsion toward him, the Miranda figure of the Calibanic Quadrangle treats her slaves as pets but is later repulsed by or uneasy with their appearance and demeanor.

Marie, the pre-slavery Iola, and "Miss Nancy" are all isolated characters. Marie "had no recollection of her father" (69) and only dimly remembers her mother and brother. Eugene Leroy sends her to a Northern school to be educated, thus isolating her from southern prejudices. Upon their marriage, Marie is further isolated, as the neighboring women find her position as lawful mistress of the plantation distasteful. Like her mother, Iola is educated in the north, where her mother thinks she will be free from "the effect of . . . intercourse [with the slaves]" (82), which she feels could damage her children's lives and characters. Although Marie believes that her children's ignorance about their race is an "oppressive silence," she does not oppose her husband. Her wish to separate herself and her children from blackness reveals an undercurrent of racial anxiety similar to Miranda's desire to separate herself from Caliban racially, when she says, ". . . thy vild race / (Though thou didst learn) had that in't which good natures / Could not abide to be with" (1.2.358-360).

Whether one chooses Frank Kermode's gloss of race as "nature" or accepts Miranda's remark as a racial distinction, (as a comparison to the King's daughter's marriage to an African might suggest) Miranda implies that she and Caliban are two kinds of beings, and she, of course, possesses a "good nature." Similarly, Marie draws

a line of racial and social distinction between her family and her slaves, and fears the contamination that could result from "intercourse" with black people.

Iola is a Miranda figure when she believes that she is white, and her condescending attitude and staunch support of slavery make her a Miranda to Eugene Leroy's Prospero. In a debate with schoolmates she insists:

Our slaves do not want their freedom. They would not take it if we gave it to them. . . . My father says the slaves would be very well contented if no one put wrong notions in their heads. (97-98)

She then invites her adversary to visit the south in the winter, which "would cure [her] of [her] Abolitionism" (99). While Iola notices that her mother does not seem to approve of slavery, she, like Miranda, sides with her father and denies the indignity of human bondage, preferring to believe that the slaves would be "contented" in the absence of abolitionist ideas.

The other Miranda figure, Miss Nancy, whose husband is unreliable, is the isolated mistress of a large plantation. Miranda thus recalls her effort to educate Caliban:

. . . 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. (1.2.353-358)

Similarly, Miss Nancy "taught [Robert] to read on the same principle she would have taught a pet animal amusing tricks" (16). Miss Nancy's isolation becomes more severe

after the Civil War, when Robert observes "her eye had lost its brightness, her step its elasticity, and her whole appearance indicated that she was slowly sinking beneath a weight of sorrow which was heavier far than her weight of years" (150). Robert's new status as a free man, and particularly the sexual threat he poses in her mind now that he is a grown man, leads Miss Nancy to feel vulnerable. Harper indicates Miss Nancy's realization of Robert's sexuality when she writes:

When she heard that Robert had called to see her she was going to receive him in the hall, as she would have done any of her former slaves, but her mind immediately changed when she saw him. He was not the light-hearted, careless, mischief-loving Robby of former days, but a handsome man, with heavy moustache, dark, earnest eyes, and proud military bearing. (150-51)

Miss Nancy clearly sees Robert as a "man," and a handsome one at that. Her confusion about how to address him, and her pointed objectification of him, reveals that Robert's body, and therefore his sexuality, threatens her. Robert, too, takes note of her body--her eye and her step.

These Miranda figures, proponents of slavery and racial division, sharply contrast to the Ariel figures, the "progressive" black or "tragic mulatta" women in the Calibanic Quadrangle. Despite Shakespeare's male characterization of the aery spirit, Ariel is a feminine counterpart to Caliban's aggressive maleness. Ariel impersonates goddesses rather than gods, and as often as not, a woman represents him on the modern stage. Ariel's imprisonment in a "cloven pine" by Sycorax, a black woman, is a

feminine symbol of enclosure.³

The Ariel figures in *Iola Leroy* are Grace and Iola herself. Ariel's link to Sycorax and his subsequent enslavement by Prospero inform the role of the "tragic mulatta" in the Calibanic Quadrangle because both involve suppressing the image of the black woman. Carla L. Peterson writes:

. . . the tragic mulatta plot became the site in which cultural fears over female sexuality were invested, in the process of conflating the sexuality and blackness of its heroine. Such cultural anxieties over issues of race and sexuality and blackness could only be allayed by the sacrifice of the black woman. (100)

Iola and Grace do not appear to be black, but they refuse to "pass," or feign whiteness, and instead accept their black grandparents. Ariel's enclosure, as Prospero reminds him, is such that a black woman is part of his heritage as well; and, like Iola and Grace, his link to a black woman results in slavery. Iola and Grace came from the womb of blackness just as Ariel came from Sycorax's figurative womb, the cloven pine. In both cases the black female ancestor is "sacrificed," or absent from the narrative.

Grace and Iola together occupy the Ariel site in the Calibanic Quadrangle. Harper describes Grace, a child when she dies, as situated halfway between earth and the spirit world. Grace's embodies Ariel's child-like spirituality, evidenced by Harper's description of her final moments:

. . . an unwonted radiance lit up her eye, and an expression of ineffable

gladness overspread her face, as she murmured: 'It *is* beautiful, so beautiful!' Fainter and fainter grew her voice, until, without a struggle or sigh, she passed away beyond the power of oppression and prejudice.
(108)

Iola as Ariel figure in the Calibanic Quadrangle embodies his innocence and his desire for freedom by maintaining her "virtue" in the face of unwanted sexual advances and by actively participating in the "uplift" of African-Americans. Just as Ariel retains his integral goodness while enslaved to Prospero, Iola fights to retain her virtue. The power of Ariel's unshakable goodness manifests itself when the spirit's sympathy for the Italians wandering about the island under Prospero's spell moves Prospero to pity:

Hast thou, which art but air, a touch, a feeling
Of their afflictions, and shall not myself,
One of their kind, that relish as sharply
Passion as they, be kindlier moved than thou art?

(5.1.21-25)

Iola retains the same unshakable goodness in slavery, as she says:

I had outrages heaped on me which might well crimson the cheek of honest womanhood with shame, but I never fell into the clutches of an owner for whom I did not feel the utmost loathing and intensest horror. I have heard men talk glibly of the degradation of the negro, but there is a vast difference between abasement of condition and degradation of character. (115)

Iola's natural goodness radiates from her, as "her face was a passport to [the black community's] hearts" (146). Although Ariel never shows "loathing" for his master as Iola does, the two share the sharp distinction "between abasement of condition and degradation of character" under slavery, as both are "spirit[s] too delicate to act [on] earthy and abhorr'd commands" (1.2.272-3). Harper and other writers collapse the Miranda figure and Ariel figure in their mulatto heroines because combining signifies both intelligence and the internal goodness, yet Iola transcends both Miranda and Ariel in her quest for racial uplift and self-reliance. Neither Miranda nor Ariel would exhaustively search for work among prejudiced employers, but Iola is willing to face such odds, stepping out of her "safe" environment. Iola's desire to work does not threaten her femininity, as might be expected from the genre, because she is fortified by Miranda's youth and intelligence and Ariel's inherent virtue.

Just as Caliban's physicality complements Ariel's ethereal presence, in the Calibanic Quadrangle the Caliban figure is a man of action--a counterpart to the Ariel figure's spiritual goodness. The Caliban figure is motherless, racially indeterminate in his "white" appearance, and tied to language. He is Henry Louis Gates Jr.'s trickster figure in a Yankee uniform. The Caliban figures are Harry Leroy, Dr. Latimer, and Robert Johnson.

All three Caliban figures have mothers who, like Sycorax, are black or racially indeterminate women and who play marginal roles in the text. Dr. Latimer's mother plays a minor role in his narrative, and both Robert and Harry are separated from their mothers at a young age, just as Caliban is separated from Sycorax. Like Caliban, all

three are fiercely loyal to that absent mother. Robert and Harry Leroy--Harry after some prodding--refuse to "pass" in deference to their mothers, and Dr. Latimer chooses his mother's race rather than "pass" and inherit wealth and social standing. The absence of a living parent amplifies Caliban's status as "Other," or alien, and leaves him prey to Prospero's enslavement. The breakup of families produced by slavery also created "otherness" in the slave apart from skin color, a useful tactic when dealing with white-looking slaves.

The apparent whiteness of Harry, Latimer, and Robert signifies dominance--yet all three are part of an oppressed group. This paradox, the sign of dominance coupled with a low social status, also characterizes Caliban. Jonathan Dollimore identifies Caliban's attempted rape of Miranda as the tool of the oppressor, not the oppressed:

Just as the language of this play discloses the incipient terms of racism, so its representation of nature involves the racist construction of the colonial subject, and one of the primary displacements of colonial violence: the Jacobeans could not foresee the sexually violent history of colonization, but to know that rape was most often the crime of the dominant, of the master, they hardly needed to. (111)

This paradox has its origins in racial indeterminacy. Stephen Greenblatt writes that Shakespeare "[places] Caliban at the outer limits of difference only to insist upon a mysterious measure of resemblance" (31), which mirrors the ironic double-play of the southern slaveholder who insists that blacks are inferior, or a sub-species, yet forces his slave women into bearing his own slave children.

Caliban would "people the isle with Calibans," creating copies of himself and destroying Miranda's pedigree. Without minimizing the seriousness of rape, I posit that Caliban's motive for the attempted rape reveals his sense of his own "otherness." What better way to stop feeling like an alien than to pass one's genes on to another generation? If Caliban is a monster, he is also a man. His desire to impregnate Miranda shows that despite Prospero and Miranda's words to the contrary, he thinks he is compatible: the same species. Miranda's horror at his admission, which precedes the "Abhorred slave" speech, reveals her fear of miscegenation--a fear passed down to her by Prospero, which could possibly explain her use of the term "vild race." The white appearance of Harry, Dr. Latimer, and Robert serves as a reminder to the white southern slave owner that he too has "peopled this isle with Calibans." The Caliban figure's sign of dominance threatens to undermine the Prospero figure's theory of racial inferiority and, when a white-looking black man can "pass," could destroy the pedigree of protected southern womanhood.

Caliban's greatest gift is his ability to curse, which, if one agrees with Dollimore's assertion that "Caliban already had a language . . . the language of the colonial subject . . . perceived only as brutish gabbling" (110), makes him, in a sense, bilingual. Although we hear none of his "brutish gabbling," we are to assume that his hostility is part of his inability to take "any print of goodness," which is, according to Miranda, his natural state. Caliban's lost language informs his curses. Caliban manipulates the oppressor's language to use it against his oppressor.

As tricksters in the Calibanic Quadrangle, Harry Leroy, Dr. Latimer and

Robert also use the oppressor's language against him, thus "cursing" him. Harper writes of Robert's literacy, "[Miss Nancy] had never imagined the time would come when he would use the machinery she had put in his hands to help overthrow the institution to which she was so ardently attached" (16). The Caliban figure's literacy, along with his ability to move between white and black discourse, "curses" the institution of slavery.

Harry, though not as adept as the other two, takes the first step by joining a "colored" regiment where, "having nearly all of his life been used to colored people, and being taught by his mother to be . . . respectful to them, he was soon able to gain their esteem" (127).

The "joke" that Dr. Gresham and Dr. Latimer play on Dr. Latrobe "curses" Latrobe's pre-conceived ideas about tell-tale signs of blackness in the whitest mulatto. After talking with Latimer, Latrobe observes, "he is one of the finest specimens of our young manhood" (237). When Gresham reveals Latimer as a mulatto, Latrobe responds as though cursed, as he "could not help feeling a sense of vexation at the signal mistake he had made" (239).

Of the three Caliban figures, Robert's curse is the most powerful of all.

Peterson identifies Robert's interpretive ability:

Although born a slave, Robert nonetheless fully comprehends both white and black cultures, elite and subaltern classes, military officers and enlisted soldiers, and his function is to mediate between these disparate groups. (107)

Robert, remembering his separation from his mother, says, "[Miss Nancy] knows she can't catch old birds with chaff, so she is just as sweet as a peach to her Bobby. But as soon as I get a chance I will play her a trick the devil never did . . . I'll leave her" (34), reminiscent of Caliban's "the red-plague rid you / For learning me your language!" (1.2.364-65) and Caliban's later conspiracy against Prospero. A "plague" that results from Robert's literacy descends on his mistress. When he reads in the paper that the slaves can flee to the Union army, Robert inspires the large majority of Miss Nancy's slaves to escape, cutting short the plantation's productivity and bringing about her later decline in fortunes.

Caliban realizes the foolishness of his conspiracy against Prospero and vows to "be wise hereafter / And seek for grace" (5.1.295-6). Miranda marries the right man and is free to procreate. Prospero acknowledges "this thing of darkness," and manumits Ariel with an expansive, "To the elements / Be free," but in the Epilogue discards his books for political power. Despite Prospero's grudging acknowledgement, Caliban remains the "Other."

In the Calibanic Quadrangle, *The Tempest* from the perspective of the "Other," the Ariel figure is free to define himself and lives thereafter with love and security. The Miranda figure suffers a fall from prosperity for her ill-treatment of the slave. The Prospero figure becomes disillusioned with his power to control events and finds his carefully constructed hierarchies shattered to pieces. The Caliban figure finds a caring family and ends his days in much-deserved happiness and freedom. *Iola Leroy: Or,*

Shadows Uplifted captures the soul of Caliban--his rebelliousness and his love for beauty--and, without reluctance, gives him back his birthright.

Notes

- ¹ In Chapter five I argue that the Caliban figure in Hopkins's *Hagar's Daughter* is a woman, Aurelia Madison.
- ² Such arguments have had a pervasive effect in American culture, as evidenced by Dinesch d'Souza's argument for the benefits of slavery on the slave in his latest book, *The End of Racism* (New York: Free Press, 1995).
- ³ We can assume that Sycorax is from Algeria, since Shakespeare tells us that's where she came from, and not that she was a visitor there. Several critics either ignore Sycorax's racial origins, or use the term "blue-ey'd," a reference to dark circles around the eyes, as proof that Sycorax is white. Africans, particularly Algerians, come in several different shades--some light enough to see dark circles.
- ⁴ For a study of a black Miranda, see Malin Lavon Walther, "Toni Morrison's *Tar Baby*: Re-figuring the Colonizer's Aesthetics." *Cross-Cultural Performances*. Ed. Marianne Novy. Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1993. 137-149.

CHAPTER 5

SHAKESPEAREAN RE-VISIONS IN THE NOVELS OF PAULINE E. HOPKINS

The sentimental romance genre seems a perfect vehicle for illustrating the African diaspora. Pauline Hopkins consciously uses the genre to draw together the "dark races" of the earth, throwing wide the net to catch the Africanist presence through centuries and across oceans. According to Carla L. Peterson, Hopkins also "sought to turn this genre back against itself, to critique its nationalist and imperialist ideology from a black feminist perspective" (180). In keeping with this goal, Hopkins uses Shakespeare, the most canonical and Western of all writers of "literature," to critique racial inequities in her time. Hopkins writes in her Preface to *Contending Forces*, "we must ourselves develop the men and women who will faithfully portray the inmost thoughts and feelings of the Negro with all the fire and romance which lie dormant in our history, and, as yet, unrecognized by writers of the Anglo-Saxon race" (14). She demonstrates in her work a profound knowledge of "writers of the Anglo-Saxon race," using epigraphs from such traditional literary figures as Emerson, Whittier, Grey and Cowper. More than all the other writers that she demonstrates familiarity with, Hopkins incorporates Shakespeare into her "Romance Illustrative of Negro Life North and South."

Anna Julia Cooper says of the omission of the African-American self in literature that "it seems an *Anglo Saxon characteristic* to have such overweening confidence in his own power of induction that there is no equation which he would acknowledge to be indeterminate, however many unknown quantities it may possess" (203-4). Like Cooper, Pauline Hopkins problematizes the dominant discourse in contemporary American Romantic texts, showing that popular ideas of self-reliance and transcendentalism become quite complicated for a person of color in the nineteenth century. Contrary to her statement in the Preface, Hopkins accomplishes this problematization through her use of Shakespearean characters and themes.

As I've discussed in chapter one, Shakespeare reflects early modern England's concern with skin color in four Black characters: Aaron the Moor, the Prince of Morocco, Othello, and Cleopatra. References to Moors, Ethiopes, and Africa permeate the body of his work. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and the "Dark Lady" sonnets, Shakespeare amplifies dark female physical features such as hair, eyes, and eyebrows, into racial markers, creating an internal dialogue on blackness as beauty. This amplification from "black haired" to "Black" surfaces in Hopkins's narrative as her white characters "test" white-looking mulattoes for "the infusion of Negro blood."

Many writers of the Romantic period in nineteenth-century America looked to Shakespeare as an authority and kindred spirit. Indeed, Walt Whitman says in his "Preface to Leaves of Grass" that "the ferment and germination even of the United States to-day, dat[es] back to, and in my opinion [is] mainly founded on, the

Elizabethan age in English history, the age of Francis Bacon and Shakespeare" (47).

Very much a woman of her age, Pauline Hopkins¹ turns to Shakespeare's plays in her work. Thomas J. Otten writes that Hopkins is "arguing for African contributions to Western culture" (241), and her use of Shakespeare furthers that argument. Hopkins uses Shakespeare's plays that portray people of color and the subversive alternatives they present to early modern society to reify her characters' isolation, victimization, and entrapment within caste and color prejudice in nineteenth-century America. Hopkins infuses her novels with a variety of Shakesporean characters.

In *Contending Forces* Hopkins uses the Calibanic Quadrangle and establishes an intertextual link between Caliban and Jesse Monfort. She binds together two racially indeterminate women: Shakespeare's Hermia and Sappho Clark, and she appropriates the racialized casket plot from *The Merchant of Venice*. Hopkins again employs the Calibanic Quadrangle in the serialized novel *Hagar's Daughter: A Story of Southern Caste Prejudice*, in which she re-figures Caliban in a woman and, unlike Harper, allows a Sycorax figure to enter the narrative. With the second of her magazine novels, *Winona: A Tale of Negro Life in the South and Southwest*, she recreates Aaron the Moor from *Titus Andronicus* with Judah, an enslaved young black man, figuring him as a righteously angry, but not evil, force. I conclude with the third novel, *Of One Blood: Or, the Hidden Self*, in which she re-envisions Antony's relationship with Cleopatra, reinventing Shakespeare's only clearly black woman and erasing Antony's

patriarchal and racial anxiety over their progeny.

Contending Forces begins with the story of the Monfort family. Charles Monfort, a wealthy planter and slave-owner in Bermuda, moves his wife, Grace, his two sons, Charles Junior and Jesse, and his slaves, to Newbern, North Carolina to escape a bill of gradual emancipation in Bermuda. Hopkins suggests, but does not confirm, that Charles Monfort and his wife could have some African blood. Once arrived in North Carolina, landed slave-owner Anson Pollock and his cronies cast doubt on Grace Monfort's race and conspire to denounce the Monfort family. Anson Pollock murders Charles Monfort, but Grace Monfort foils his designs by committing suicide. To exact his revenge, Anson Pollock takes ownership of Charles Junior and Jesse, but immediately sells young Charles to an English mineralogist, who later frees the boy. Jesse, however, remains with Anson Pollock until he escapes north and marries into a black family.

Within the Calibanic Quadrangle, Hopkins elevates Caliban's sympathetic characteristics when she recreates him in the character of Jesse Monfort. Hazel V. Carby notes that it is "the shared discourse of imperialism that Hopkins attempted to enter and disrupt" (134), and critics have long considered Caliban a representative of those wronged by imperialism. Like his Shakespearean counterpart, Jesse's skin color is a matter of speculation, and depends largely on how the community responds to rumors about his mother's race. Jesse's position as "nuthin' but a nigger" (77), makes him mutant and a curiosity -- just like Caliban.

Jesse shares other attributes with Caliban, including his former residence on an island, his treatment at the hands of his "adopted" father, his retreat into dreams, and his final disillusionment. Critics often cite Bermuda as a possible source for Prospero's island, given Ariel's reference to "the still-vex'd Bermoothes" (1.2.227), and Hopkins makes the geographical connection explicit:

Bermuda presents itself, outside of its importance as a military station for a great power, as a vast sanatorium for the benefit of invalids. A temperate climate, limpid rivers, the balmy fragrance and freshness of the air, no winter,-- nature changing only in the tints of its foliage,--have contributed to its renown as a health-giving region; and thus Shakespeare's magic island of Prospero and Miranda has become, indeed, to the traveller

The spot of earth uncurst

To show how all things were created first. (21-2)

Remembering Caliban's attempt to assert himself through the foiled rape of Miranda, Prospero calls Caliban "Thou most lying slave / Whom stripes may move, not kindness!" (1.2.344). In the same way, when Jesse attempts to assert his own dominance and resist his master, he is "severely flogged" (74).

Caliban says that Prospero once "strok'st me and made much of me" (1.2.333), Caliban's show of defiance leads Prospero to limit Caliban's use of the island (1.2.342-4) just as Anson Pollock keeps the "petted darling" Jesse locked in a "lonely cabin" (74).

While in captivity, both Caliban and Jesse commune with an absent and maligned mother, and find well-being only in dreams. Both are "destined to follow the condition of their mothers into a black, segregated realm of existence from where they were unable to challenge the white-controlled structure of property and power" (Carby 144).² Caliban, who has never known his mother, uses her memory to curse Prospero, hurling invectives such as "all the charms of / Sycorax, toads, beetles, bats, light on you!" (1.2.339-40), and he adopts his mother's god, Setebos, but knows that Prospero's "power . . . would . . . make a vassal of him" (371-3). Caliban reveals his rich dream life, in which

. . . sometime voices,
 That if I then had wak'd after a long sleep,
 Will make me sleep again, and then in dreaming,
 The clouds methought would open, and show riches
 Ready to drop upon me, that when I wak'd
 I cried to dream again. (3.2.138-43)

During the fearful nights in Anson Pollock's house, Jesse "would weep over the painful past. Then he would feel the touch of a tiny hand upon his eyelids. It was his mother's hand; he knew it to be so. Then he would lose himself in sweet dreams" (75-6). Both Jesse and Caliban delight in their dream-world where there are no abusive stepfathers and the voices (or touches) are friendly.

Unlike Jesse, who denies his position as a slave, claiming that "I am no man's

property; I belong to Jesus Christ!" (77), Caliban belongs to Prospero at the close of *The Tempest*. Caliban calls himself a "thrice-double ass" and vows to "be wise hereafter / And seek for grace" (5.1.296). Caliban remains a slave, and reconciles himself to his position. Although Jesse escapes slavery, he reconciles himself to "blackness" and is "absorbed into that unfortunate race, of whom it is said that a man had better be born dead than to come into the world as part and parcel of it" (79). Thus Hopkins uses Shakespeare's character to enhance her own creation, and complicates the notion of self-reliance in a system that condones slavery.

The second part of Hopkins's narrative takes place after the Civil War. The Smith family, direct descendants of Jesse Monfort, operates a boarding house in Boston. There, John Pollock Langley, a mulatto descendant of Anson Pollock, and William Smith compete for the attentions of the beautiful boarder Sappho Clark, the daughter of two freed mulattoes. Sappho, whose birth name is Mabelle Beaubean, was abducted and raped by her white uncle. John Langley initially courts William's sister, Dora Smith, but Sappho's beauty, and later his discovery of her illegitimate child, propel him to seek Sappho Clark as his mistress. Confronted by the truth of her past, Sappho flees to New Orleans, where William Smith finds and marries her.

Hopkins again uses a Shakespearean character when she creates a tragic Hermia in Sappho Clark³ who, like *A Midsummer Night's Dream's* young lover, is a maligned beauty at the mercy of chance and open to racial invective.

Hopkins explicitly refers to Hermia when Sappho asks Dora Smith, "do you

ever mean to marry, or are you going to pine in single blessedness on my hands and be a bachelor-maid to the end?" (121), an echo of Theseus's speech to Hermia (and Queen Elizabeth) that "earthlier happy is the rose distill'd, / Than that which withering on the virgin thorn / Grows, lives, and dies in single blessedness" (1.1.76-8).

Hopkins describes Sappho as "tall and fair, with hair of a golden cast" (107), but though Sappho could "pass," she chooses to align herself with the black race. Hermia and Helena may be cast as physically alike, except for Hermia's slightly darker hair and eyes, and slightly shorter stature. Yet after Puck's misguided administration of "love-in-idleness," Shakespeare amplifies Hermia's darker features into racial characteristics.

Along with their position as racial Other, Sappho as much for her lightness as Hermia for her real or constructed darkness, both are at the mercy of chance.

While Hermia endures the abuse heaped on her by Lysander because of Puck's well-intentioned slip, John Pollock Langley acts as an evil Puck, who perverts Sappho's destiny after observing her with Will Smith. Hopkins describes John P. Langley as a woodland sprite with evil intentions,

John Langley was returning from an errand down town, and *attracted by the beauty of the morning*, determined to cross the Garden on his way to the South End. Suddenly, *beneath the trees he espied the two lovers*. He paused a moment. They were so much absorbed in each other that they had not seen him. He turned aside into a path which ran very near

to them on one side, and *paused beneath the shadow of some friendly trees where he was secure from observation and could watch their movements unseen*. (313, emphasis added)

Sappho's actions after the confrontation with John Langley echo Hermia's forlorn walk through the woods, "never so in woe" (3.2.442), as Sappho "walked again through the paths where a few hours before she had known so much happiness. She knew no fear; the darkness concealed her. Again she sat upon the seat where she had passed the brightest moments of her life" (340).

Like Jesse Monfort, Sappho Clark transcends the boundaries placed on her. Claudia Tate writes "Sappho transforms herself from a passive heroine, the object of male desire, into an active female-hero, the subject of her own desire" ("Allegories" 118). Hermia never becomes "an active female-hero," but, like Sappho, the resolution of conflict comes through marriage.

Hopkins's references to the casket plot in *The Merchant of Venice* further complicate the notion of self-reliance.⁴ Hopkins uses quotations from both the gold and silver casket scenes, but the lead casket is conspicuously absent. The gold casket, chosen by the Prince of Morocco, symbolizes the discrepancy between seeming and being, as the Prince of Arragon says, ". . . the fond eye doth teach / Which pries not to th'interior, but like the martlet / Builds in the weather on the outward wall, / Even in the force and road of casualty" (2.9.27-30), but, as I discussed in chapter one, Portia's attitude toward Morocco subverts this theme. Hopkins's omission of the lead

casket signifies that in racial clashes in American Society (and in early modern England) and in the construction of stereotypes, all that glisters may very well be gold, as "white" is often synonymous with "pleasing to the eye," even in Hopkins's work. Indeed, Dora believes "all that glisters is not gold" to be "rubbish" (206).

The identification of John P. Langley with the silver casket, and the Prince of Arragon (220), adds to Hopkins's comment on Shakespeare's casket plot and its complex relationship to people of color. Langley stands in opposition to the Prince of Morocco, and to those in Hopkins's book who have suffered indignities because of color prejudice. Instead, Langley has "the pleasant features of the Caucasian race" (221), but Hopkins reveals that he, like Arragon, is a "silver'd o'er fool," whose motivations come from the desire for monetary gain and the assumption that he deserves what he desires. The lines just before the epigraph to Chapter 12 read, "Let none presume / To wear an undeserved dignity" (2.9.39-40), and both Arragon and John commit this offense. For John, Hopkins hints that his "undeserved dignity" derives from his skin color.

The lead casket in *The Merchant of Venice* casts doubt on the idea of the primacy of aesthetic beauty, "so may the outward shows be least themselves-- / The world is still deceiv'd with ornament" (3.2.73-4), but the hegemonic dominance of European-American physical characteristics subverts this meaning. The lead casket, with its explicit lesson that one must value inner beauty above physical beauty has no place in Hopkins's narrative of nineteenth-century attitudes toward African-Americans.

Hopkins again takes up the Calibanic Quadrangle in *Hagar's Daughter*, a novel that teems with disguise and mistaken identity. Here the Calibanic Quadrangle takes a slightly different turn because the Caliban figure is a woman: the beautiful and devious mullata Aurelia Madison. Also, Hopkins allows a Sycorax figure to enter the narrative. Again, because the plot is quite complex, I will here provide a short synopsis. St. Clair Enson, the no-good son of a wealthy plantation owner who befriends a slave trader known only as Walker, is cut out of his father's estate when his brother, Ellis Enson and wife Hagar produce an infant female heir. Walker reveals Hagar to be a mulatto orphan adopted by her white parents. Somewhat repulsed by the news of his wife's origin, he abandons her and the infant, and is presumed dead. To escape from St. Clair Enson and Walker, Hagar, infant clutched to her bosom, leaps into a river.

Twenty years later we meet the lovely Jewel Bowen, the adopted daughter of Senator and Mrs. Bowen. Jewel becomes involved with Cuthbert Sumner, a young man whose liberalism is tempered by racial prejudice, since he will help the Negro cause, but finds social intercourse with them distasteful. The beautiful Aurelia Madison, once betrothed to Sumner, and in league with her father, Major Madison, and General Benson, competes with Jewel for Sumner's attentions and tricks Jewel into thinking Sumner prefers her. General Benson, in the meantime, tries to win the hand (and the fortune) of Jewel Bowen. A secretary under Benson's employ, Elise Bradford, tells Sumner that she and General Benson are to be married, that she has a child by him, and that Aurelia Madison is the mulatto daughter of one of Major

Madison's former slaves. Bradford is murdered under mysterious circumstances and Sumner, the last person seen with her, is tried for the crime.

Jewel, believing Sumner innocent, marries him. Benson and Madison kidnap Jewel and Aunt Hennie Sargent, a witness to Bradford's murder at the hands of Benson and Madison. Jewel's sprightly young maid Venus enlists the help of detective Charles Henson, and discovers the whereabouts of Jewel Bowen and her grandfather. In the course of the trial, several characters reveal their true identities: Detective Henson is Ellis Enson, General Benson is St. Clair Enson, Major Madison is Walker, and Mrs. Bowen, who has recently lost her husband, reveals that she is Hagar. Sumner notes with relief that Jewel is only the adopted daughter of Senator Bowen, but infant's clothing and a letter written by Senator Bowen prove that Jewel is, in fact, Hagar's daughter. Hagar and Ellis Enson, along with Jewel -- who is aware of Sumner's prejudices -- travel to Europe for a year and return to the old plantation. Sumner realizes his folly and seeks out Jewel, but he arrives too late -- Jewel Bowen has died of "Roman fever."

As in Harper's novel, the Prospero figures embody the two sides of Prospero's character. St. Clair Enson and Walker are cruel enslavers who deny Hagar's daughter her birthright. Ellis Enson, in his initial abandonment of Hagar is the "regretful" Prospero, who finally realizes his own tyranny.

Cuthbert Sumner is the most fully developed Prospero figure, and he is Janus-faced. Carby notes that "ultimately, the political forces that Hopkins wanted to indict

could not be embodied in individually good or bad characters. The character of Cuthbert Sumner was an example of this dilemma" (151). In a speech reminiscent of Prospero and Miranda's speculations on Caliban's "nature," upon learning that his beloved Jewel's "stepmother" is mulatto, (yet baffled by Hagar's goodness), Sumner admits, ". . . those characteristics are but an accident of environment, not the true nature of her parent stock. I have always heard that the Negro race excelled in low cunning" (269). Sumner also shares Prospero's miscegenation fears. Referring to his broken engagement to Aurelia Madison he says, ". . . a white man may be betrayed into marrying her. I certainly came near to it myself . . . I am thankful for my deliverance" (160). Betrayal and deliverance, of course, characterize both Prospero's exile from Milan and his desire to see "his issue" become kings of Naples. When Sumner changes his mind and decides to accept Jewel as his wife--too late, of course--his realization reveals the purpose of the Prospero figure in the Calibanic Quadrangle:

Cuthbert Sumner questioned wherein he had sinned and why he was so severely punished. Then it bore in upon him: the sin is the nation's. It must be washed out. The plans of the Father are not changed in the nineteenth century; they are shown to us in different forms. (283)

Carby identifies what I see as a Miranda-like quality in Jewel Bowen, whose "usefulness as a foil ceased with the end of her desirability as a commodity of exchange for her father's fortune" (153), but the strongest Miranda figure is Elise Bradford, General Benson's wronged secretary. Despite her knowledge of Prospero figure

General Benson's cruelty and duplicity, she exclaims to Sumner, "He has tortured you, fooled you, deceived you--Yes, it is true; but I--God help me--I love him" (155). In addition, in true Miranda style, Elise Bradford comments on the Caliban figure's race. While she expresses some sympathy for Aurelia Madison, she tempers that pity with selfish loyalty to the Benson and the despair he has caused her:

Do not blame her. Fate is against her. She is helpless. The education of generations of her foreparents has entered into her blood. I should feel sorry for her if I could, but I feel only my own misery and degradation. I am selfish in my despair. Happy, prosperous people sympathize with the woes of others, but sometimes I feel like laughing at their mimic woes, my own are so much greater in comparison. (159)

As a Miranda figure, Bradford refuses to reach any kind of consubstantiality with Aurelia Madison--despite the similarity of their circumstances--citing Aurelia's "blood" as the greatest measure of difference between them and cruelly minimizing Aurelia's sorrow. As the Miranda figure in the Calibanic Quadrangle, Bradford's attempt at kindness falls short and grants her no redemption. She dies--unmourned--within hours.

Hopkins divides the Ariel figure into three characters: Hagar, Jewel, and Venus. Before marrying Ellis Enson, Hagar is an aery woodland sprite:

Under the strong, straight branches of a beech she tied three old shawls, hammock-like, one under another, for strength and safety. It was not very far from the ground. If it should come down, she might be bruised

slightly, but not killed. She crawled cautiously into her nest; she had let down the long braids of her hair, and as she lolled back in her retreat, they fell over the sides of the hammock and swept the top of the long, soft grass. Lying there, with nothing in sight but the leafy branches of the trees high above her head, through which gleams of the deep blue sky came softly, she felt as if she had left the world and was floating, Ariel-like, in midair. (36)

Unlike Iola Leroy in Harper's novel, Hagar and Jewel never transcend Ariel's passivity. Hagar attempts to do so, as Mrs. Bowen, but she ultimately wields no power. Jewel dances "like a fairy" (119), yet her impotence as the Ariel figure manifests itself in a painting she scrutinizes while in captivity:

Up and down the sides of the room her eyes wandered aimlessly; sometimes she felt that she was losing her mind. Presently a painting fixed into the wall arrested her attention. It was the portrait of an impossible wood nymph, but so faded that its beauty--if it had once possessed any--was entirely gone. (214)

Like Ariel, Jewel is helpless in her imprisonment. The faded wood nymph reflects that impotence. With an interesting twist, another Ariel figure, Venus, a young black maid, comes to her rescue. Unlike the other Ariel figures, Venus is noticeably black, and appears more self-reliant than Hagar or Jewel. As an Ariel figure, Venus most resembles Harper's Iola Leroy who looks white but does not hide her true race. Hagar

chooses to "pass," and Jewel is less than pleased with the discovery of her race. In the Calibanic Quadrangle, it would seem, the only way for Ariel to become an active character rather than a passive slave is to accept her blackness. Carby notes that "Hopkins extended her applications of the masculinized female to Venus, who evolved into a heroine of the story" (149). Venus is a heroine because she is active. While she responds to the Prospero figure's suggestions, she often takes her own initiative. When Venus enlists the help of Detective Henson (Prospero figure Ellis Enson in disguise), the opening exchange between them highlights the most fanciful elements in the Prospero/Ariel relationship, relegating the master/slave component to the background, though Henson does question her history:

'I'm Miss Jewel Bowen's maid,' she declared abruptly. The detective whirled around in his chair at her words, and in an instant was all attention. His keen eyes ran over the neat little brown figure standing demurely before him, with a rapid mental calculation of her qualities.

'What is your name?'

'Venus Camilla Johnson.'

'How long have you been in Miss Bowen's employ?' 'All the winter.'

'Who sent you here?'

'Nobody. I keep my business to myself. Things are too curious around Wash'nton these days to be talking too much.'

The shadow of a smile lurked around the corners of Mr. Henson's

mouth. (223-4)

Venus is bright, confident, and willing to help. The two immediately establish a bond of trust, and Venus responds with enthusiasm to Henson's suggestion that she wear boy's clothing and pose as "Billy" to discover Jewel Bowen's whereabouts. Venus's impersonation of the opposite sex and her cheerful acceptance of the mission ally her to Ariel, but in her fearlessness and initiative she transcends Ariel's passivity, becoming the virtuous, "progressive" black woman Ariel in the Calibanic Quadrangle.

Hagar's Daughter is the only one of the five novels I've discussed to allow a clear Sycorax figure to enter the narrative. Significantly, Auntie Griffith has the charge of Enson Hall: the birthplace of Hagar and Jewel's misfortunes. Auntie Griffith "was regarded with awe by both whites and blacks, being a reputed 'witch woman' used to dealing with and trafficking with evil spirits" (228). Her physical description matches Prospero's character sketch of Caliban's "hag" mother:

Tall and raw-boned, she was a nightmare of horror. Her body was bent and twisted by disease from its original height. Her protruding chin was sharp like a razor, and the sunken jaws told of toothless gums within.

Her ebony skin was seamed by wrinkles; her eyes, yellow with age, like Hamlet's description of old men's eyes, purged 'thick amber and plum-tree gum.' The deformed hands were horny and toilworn. Her dress was a garment which had the virtue of being clean, although its original texture had long since disappeared beneath a multitude of many-hued patches. (228)

Auntie Griffith serves no other function in *Hagar's Daughter* than to cast a ghoulish gloom on Enson Hall, just as Sycorax provides a "earthy and abhorr'd," yet female, presence to the magical island.

Hopkins deviates from previous incarnations of the *Tempest* paradigm when she gives Aurelia Madison the Caliban role. Like Harper's Robert Johnson and Dr. Latimer, Aurelia Madison is a master of the double-voice, and excels at duplicity. Unlike the male Caliban figures, including Jesse Monfort, Aurelia Madison is virtually helpless against the two Prospero figures who control her and must help Major Madison and General Benson to carry out their evil schemes for fear of social disgrace. While Aurelia at first appears to exemplify Caliban's darker side (the betrayer/rapist), Hopkins makes it impossible to dismiss her as purely evil--just as Shakespeare muddies Caliban's "nature." Carby states that "Unlike [Hagar] and Jewel, Aurelia was not a mere victim but a fighter" (148). In her role as victim/fighter Aurelia Madison slides easily into the Caliban position.

As with all the other Caliban figures, Aurelia's mother is absent from the narrative, and she is an active contrast to Jewel's passive Ariel. While she is beautiful, Aurelia's physical Calibanic quality becomes immediately apparent in her first appearance before the social elite who believe "this woman was quite the loveliest thing they had ever seen, *startling and somewhat bizarre, perhaps*, but still marvelously, undeniably lovely" (115, my emphasis). As I mentioned in chapter one, Stephen Greenblatt sees Caliban's "the red-plague rid you" curse as a scathing victory, albeit a

small one. In her confrontation with the main Prospero figure, Cuthbert Sumner, Aurelia too manages a small but incisive vindication of herself and her actions.

Sumner plans to destroy Aurelia's self-confidence when he says, "Let us end this scene and all relations that have ever existed,--if you were as pure as snow, and I loved you as my other self, *I would never wed with one of colored blood, an octoroon!*"

Hopkins allows us to witness Aurelia's startling self-possession. "Wordless, with corpse-like face and gleaming eyes she faced him unflinchingly. 'If I had a knife in my hand, and could stab you to the heart, I would do it!' (238), she exclaims, and blazes out her vindication with righteous anger:

'But such weapons as I possess I will use. I will not fly--I will brave you to the last! If the world is to condemn me as the descendant of a race that I abhor, it shall never condemn me as a coward!' (238)

Hopkins admits that Aurelia's "sins" are terrible, yet her characterization of Aurelia could be a portrait of Caliban himself:

terrible her *nature*, but she was but another type of the products of the accursed system of slavery--a victim of 'man's inhumanity to man' that has made 'countless millions mourn.' There is something, too, that compelled admiration in this resolute standing to her guns with the determination to face the worst that fate might have in store for her. (238, my emphasis)

Unlike Jesse Monfort or Robert Johnson, Aurelia Madison does not find eventual comfort, but "nothing criminal was charged against [her]; in fact, no one desired to

inflict more punishment on the unfortunate woman, and when she left the court room that day she vanished forever from public view" (272). Aurelia Madison's greatest deviation from the other Caliban figures is her willingness to do evil. Although others victimize her, Aurelia Madison, like Caliban, simply vanishes from the story. I cannot help but think that she would promise to "be wise hereafter and seek for grace" (5.1.295-296).

Perhaps Aurelia Madison rests on the boundaries of indeterminacy more than any of the other Caliban figures: neither black nor white, man nor woman, good nor evil, but strong in her insistence of self-worth despite the Prospero and Miranda figures' hurtful attempts to destroy her humanity. The Calibanic Quadrangle amplifies a people's struggle against the label of monstrosity.

I leave the Calibanic Quadrangle to explore two other revisions of Shakespeare's black characters in the remaining two serialized novels: *Winona* and *Of One Blood*.

Winona is the daughter of an escaped mulatto slave woman and White Eagle, a white man living among the Native Americans in Canada. Winona grows up with Judah, a black youth⁵ with whom she explores the natural world. White Eagle is murdered by an unseen assassin who kidnaps the two children, selling them into slavery. (White Eagle is actually Captain Henry, a British subject wrongfully accused of his brother's murder, who fled to America.) Their master, Colonel Titus, is White Eagle's cousin whose daughter Lillian stands to inherit the Carlingford fortune should

Captain Henry's heirs remain anonymous. Colonel Titus and his crony Thomson treat Winona and Judah cruelly. Maxwell, an attorney assigned to find the Carlingford heir, falls in love with Winona, and Judah exacts vengeance against his masters.

Hopkins revises Aaron, Shakespeare's one truly evil Moor, in Judah. Just as Aaron's name evokes the story of Moses, Judah's is reminiscent of Judah Maccabee, a leader in the fight for independence from King Antiochus IV of Syria (175-163 B.C.). Like the biblical Aaron, the Maccabees were also high priests. Hopkins's Judah, too is engaged in a righteous rebellion against oppression. Carby writes that "*Winona* is transparently a call for organized political resistance against contemporary persecution displaced to a fictional history" ("Introduction" xliii), and Judah becomes the symbol of black resistance. Hopkins refers to Judah's immense size and physical power often, as well as his intense desire for vengeance, recalling the controversial specter of black male potency in a century haunted by lynching.

I find it no coincidence that the executioner of Judah's enslavement is named Colonel Titus, nor that Titus's daughter Lillian is without voice, as is Lavinia, and physically handicapped. Shakespeare's Titus refuses to acknowledge his part in the events that culminate in Lavinia's dismemberment, instead referring all things back to his troubled affairs of state: "'Tis well, Lavinia, that thou hast no hands / For hands to do Rome service is but vain" (3.1.79-80). After Hopkins reveals his gift for public speaking, "In his pro-slavery utterances he outdid the most rabid native-born Southerners" (316), Colonel Titus asks, "'Why had this affliction been sent upon [his

daughter]? . . . If he had sinned why should punishment be sent upon the innocent and helpless?" (317). Hopkins provides us with an answer to Titus: "He rebelled against the text wherein it is taught that evil deeds shall be visited upon the progeny of the doer unto the third and fourth generations" (317-8). Colonel Titus resembles Shakespeare's Titus in his unwillingness to accept his part in creating a climate of ill will.

As with Caliban, who loses the harshest taint of malevolence in the Calibanic Quadrangle, Judah as Aaron leaves behind Aaron's overtly evil tendencies and becomes a stealthy, strong, vengeful soldier in the fight for black equality. Like Aaron, Judah is a black man in competition with a white man (Maxwell) for a "white" woman (Winona).⁷

Judah most resembles Aaron in three ways: his stealth, his fierce pride in his own blackness, and his angry lack of remorse. Aaron rarely participates directly in the numerous murders and dismemberments he inspires; as I mentioned in chapter one, his influence is primarily subversive. Cunning and duplicity make him arguably the most interesting character in *Titus Andronicus*. One of Judah's virtues is stealth, though his modus operandi includes physical as well as mental guile. When Thomson aims his gun at Winona, "a lurid glare lighted up the hall, and [Maxwell] saw a dark shadow creeping at Thomson's rear" (393). Judah

had crept along gradually advancing nearer and nearer, bending almost double in observation; then like a wild beast preparing to pounce upon his prey, he stiffened his powerful muscles and with a bound, sprang

upon Thomson. (393)

Judah later shows something of Aaron's gift for psychological manipulation when he offers Thomson a choice between death at his hands or suicide at a cliff's edge:

I've sworn to kill you and I intend to keep my oath. When I count three, jump backwards or I put a bullet into your miserable carcass. If you are alive when you strike the river, you can swim ashore; it's one chance in ten. Choose. (416)

Thomson chooses to jump.

As I discussed in chapter one, Aaron is the first Moor to ask, "is black so base a hue?" in a play full of the evil connotations of blackness. He is also the first to name the virtues of black skin, speaking for the voiceless black minority in Elizabethan England. Judah also figures his personal struggle against prejudice--the attempted murder of Thomson--as a struggle for the equitable treatment of blacks when he says, "He is the hater of my race. He is of those who enslave both body and soul and damn us with ignorance and vice and take our manhood" (422). The inclusive pronouns "us" and "our" and reference to forced "ignorance and vice" make Judah's vengeance a blow for black equality.

Finally, Judah shows no remorse for his actions, echoing Aaron's famous "If one good deed in all my life I did / I do repent it from my very soul" (5.3.189-90).

Hopkins writes:

Hate, impotent hate, had consumed his young heart for two years. An

eye for an eye was a doctrine that commended itself more and more to him as he viewed the Negro's condition in life, and beheld the horrors of the system under which he lived. Judged by the ordinary eye Judah's nature was horrible, but it was the natural outcome or growth of the 'system' as practiced upon the black race. He felt neither remorse nor commiseration for the deed just committed. (417-8)

By placing the motivation for Judah's hatred on the "system," Hopkins effectively recreates Aaron's racialized choice to do evil: "Aaron will have his soul black like his face" (3.1.205). Hopkins saves Judah from Aaron's total descent into evil, however, because Thomson (barely) survives his jump, and upon discovering the nearly dead man Judah says "It were more merciful to shoot him on the spot" (423), but Hopkins assures us that "even he felt now the sheer human repulsion from such butchery" (423). Maxwell and Winona marry in England, accompanied by Judah, who never returns to America, instead serving as a soldier for the Queen. In England Judah becomes the incarnation of Aaron's "tawny babe," where "his daring bravery and matchless courage brought its own reward; he was knighted; had honors and wealth heaped upon him, and finally married into one of the best families in the realm" (435). Judah recovers Aaron's lost royal associations and attains what Aaron never could: legitimate, sanctioned marriage to a white woman.

Taking on another of Shakespeare's interracial unions, Hopkins refashions the anxiety-ridden relationship between Antony and Cleopatra in *Of One Blood*. With this

novel, the main plot adds little to reading my analysis, therefore I omit summary. The Antony figure, Reuel Briggs, a white-looking mulatto concealing his race, is a passive, cerebral visitor to an exotic location and Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, is a powerful black woman. Unlike Antony and Cleopatra, Briggs and Candace do not have, at first, a passionate relationship. Instead they are bound by the desire to uplift the race worldwide. Another significant deviation from Shakespeare's play occurs when Briggs accepts his racial origins and becomes completely absorbed in Candace's world, yet that absorption masculinizes him and gives him power rather than casts aspersion on his greatness. Hopkins's redaction here accomplishes several goals. She amplifies the empowering function of black female power, denying the indolence associated with Cleopatra. She also predicts that the children born to Briggs and Candace will be hopeful, regal offspring who reinstate a conquered kingdom, rather than an unseen "unlawful race." ⁶ Claudia Tate notes that Candace is, conversely, "the means by which pigment is reintroduced into the royal line, inasmuch as [Reuel] lost that trait as a result of American miscegenation.

I agree with Kevin Gaines that "Hopkins's elite, Western vision of African heathenism was meant to enhance black Americans' race pride, but at the expense of the autonomy of African peoples" (435), yet I question that she "found it necessary to defer to the black community's assumptions of male leader ship" (434), because her re-evaluation of the *Antony and Cleopatra* relationship threatens patriarchal hegemony.

Several images bind Candace's Ethiopia to Cleopatra's Egypt, Briggs to

Antony, and Candace to Cleopatra. Briggs thus personifies his first view of Africa: ". . . the city smiles at them with all the fascination of a modern Cleopatra," yet "like beautiful bodies, they have the appearance of life, but within the worm of decay and death eats ceaselessly" (509), drawing together both the figure of Shakespeare's Cleopatra and the decay inherent in tragedy, or specifically, the "joy of the worm" (5.2.260).

Before he even meets Candace, Briggs and expedition leader Professor Stone establish the link between Egypt and Ethiopia:

It is a *fact* that Egypt drew from Ethiopia all the arts, sciences and knowledge of which she was mistress. The very soil of Egypt was pilfered by the Nile from the foundations of Meroe. (521)

He goes on to speculate that "black was the original color of man in prehistoric times" (521), setting the stage for Harper's pan-African agenda. Just as Cleopatra (as Egypt) is the "tawny front," Briggs notices upon his first entrance into Africa the "tawny sands and the burnished coppery sunlight" (540). Like Egypt, opulence characterizes Candace's realm in Ethiopia where:

The woods were inhabited by various kinds of birds of exquisite note and plumage. There were also a goodly number of baboons, who descended from the trees the imaginary desert 'blossomed like the rose,' and the 'waste sandy valleys' and 'thirsty wilds,' which had been assigned to this location became, on close inspection, a gorgeous scene,

decorated with Nature's most cheering garnitures, teeming with choice specimens of vegetable and animal life, and refreshed by innumerable streams, branches of rivers, not a few of which were of sufficient magnitude for commerce. (565)

All this lush scenery thrills Reuel Briggs whose areas of study include magnetism, the supernatural, medicine, and, the exotic realms of Africa. Briggs and Antony are both "orientalists" of a sort.⁷ Antony interprets events in Egypt for his fellow Romans in 2.7.18-25, describing the fruitfulness of the Nile and the native method of using the pyramids to predict the Nile's activity. Reuel Briggs, with his knowledge of the ancient Ethiopian tongue used in Meroe, "spends his days in teaching his people all that he has learned in years of contact with modern culture" (621). Reuel reverses Antony's methods: he de-fetishizes the exotic, privileging interconnectedness over difference, and uses his knowledge of Western advances to augment his African subjects rather than escape from Western pressures. In this capacity, Hopkins figures Briggs as a great leader. Hopkins's physical description of Briggs, "No one could fail to notice the breadth of shoulder, the strong throat that upheld a plain face, the long limbs, the sinewy hands. His head was that of an athlete" (443), resembles Antony's herculean hardiness. But unlike Antony, Briggs leaves behind an "unlawful," light-skinned love (he unknowingly married his own half-sister, who later dies) for a progressive dark-skinned wife. Both Antony and Briggs passionately love the "wrong" woman, yet Hopkins re-fashions the scenario making the Western world teem with

iniquity while Ethiopia promises racial uplift and unity.

Hopkins links Candace, the Queen of Meroe, to Cleopatra through a series of images. Hopkins associates Candace with Venus and Osiris, both of whom Shakespeare references frequently in *Antony and Cleopatra*. Snakes, recalling the asp, and Aeneas's Dido appear several times in the latter part of the novel. Reuel sees a statue of her ancestor, the ancient Candace:

. . . seated on a golden chariot. On her knees crouched two enormous silver serpents, each weighing thirty talents. Another queen (Professor Stone said is must be Dido from certain peculiar figures) carried in her right hand a serpent by the head, in her left hand a sceptre garnished with precious stones. (539)

Patricia Parker links the Aeneas and Dido tale to *Antony and Cleopatra*, suggesting that "Aeneas's sojourn with Dido was in this period a powerful monitory emblem (both domestic *and* imperial) of domination by a woman" (96-97), and that a "confluence of misogyny and orientalism . . . linked Cleopatra's Egypt with Dido's Carthage as exotic kingdoms ruled by women" (97). Hopkins refashions this "monitory emblem," however, because Candace's influence on Briggs inspires a change of life rather than a tragic loss of life. Re-fashioning Shakespearean characters and situations that reveal complex racial attitudes, Hopkins provides a significant dimension to her work that questions the neat resolution of racial conflict in nineteenth-century America. I hope that Hopkins's inclusion into the nineteenth-century canon will allow her to critique her more traditional contemporaries, and help realize her message of inclusivity.

Notes

¹ For Pauline Hopkins's biography, see Carby 121-144.

² For a discussion of the inscription of "mother's law" in *Contending Forces*, see Claudia Tate's essay "Allegories of Black Female Desire: Or, Rereading Nineteenth Century Sentimental Narratives of Black Female Authority," 116-26.

³ "Sappho was the poet-priestess of Lesbos, the 'isle of women' dedicated to the Goddess. Once married, mother of a daughter Cleis, Sappho devoted her later life to the love of women. She was called the Tenth Muse and revered even above Homer; but only fragments of her work remain because her books were later burned (Walker, Barbara G. *The Woman's Encyclopedia of Myths and Secrets*. San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1983).

⁴ Hopkins also uses *The Merchant of Venice* to anticipate tragic events and to suggest that society's treatment of people of color is a "nameless trouble" (44), when she uses 1.1.1-7 as an epigraph.

⁵ Here I feel I must correct Mary V. Dearborn, who identifies Judah as "a white orphan" in *Pocahontas's Daughters*. Hopkins thus describes young Judah:

The lad who handled the paddle so skilfully might have been mistaken for an Indian at first glance, for his lithe brown body lacked nothing of the suppleness and grace which constant exercise in the open alone imparts . . . as the sunlight gleamed upon his bare head it revealed the curly, crispy hair of a Negro. (289)

Much of Judah's exasperation with Winona and Maxwell's romance comes from the conviction that Winona prefers Maxwell's color.

⁶ See Lynda E. Boose for a discussion of the unrepresentability of Antony and Cleopatra's children. Boose figures their presence as damaging to white male genetic dominance.

⁷ See Edward Said's *Orientalism* for a discussion of how the "orientalist" refashions and "others" the subject of study.

CONCLUSION

I argue that there are six major movements in African-American literature that continuously re-fashion the notion of identity on the tenuous boundary between Other and poet. In the first movement, one that amplifies universality rather than difference, Jupiter Hammon, Phyllis Wheatley, and Ann Plato write inclusively, as though they are true citizens of the United States, as though untouched by W.E.B. DuBois' famous color-line.

In the second movement, before the Civil War, Mary Prince, Frederick Douglass and others speak of the debased condition of the slave and the high price of freedom. Identity in the second movement reveals itself in the tension between the written and the spoken word and makes difference a magnet with which to pull in universal consubstantiality.

The third movement, after emancipation and into the infancy of Jim Crow blurs the color-line as writers such as Frances Harper, and Pauline Hopkins fictionalize race as the "dangerous trope."

The fourth movement, the Harlem Renaissance, begins with a clear division between Du Bois and Booker T. Washington--figuring not only a black person's place but also his or her worth. Writers like Countee Cullen, James Baldwin, Richard Wright and Langston Hughes call for literary identity within the black community,

empowering difference. George Schuyler and Zora Neale Hurston create a more inclusive literary identity in a tangle of backlash and obscurity.

The fifth movement in African-American literature, inextricably tied to the Black Power movement in the United States, draws its fuel from frustration as poets like Nikki Giovanni and LeRoi Jones reclaim the African and try to undo the inheritance of slavery by sheer force of will.

In the sixth and current movement in African-American literature, writers like Toni Morrison, Alice Walker, and Octavia Butler not only travel back to Africa, but reclaim the Middle Passage, healing the loss of identity that necessitated this long process of re-discovery.

This tension between Other and poet that defines African-American literature defines Shakespeare's black characters as well. Aaron, Othello, the Prince of Morocco, Caliban, and Cleopatra struggle to maintain dignity in their position as Other, and while their bombastic speech and dark skins clearly demarcate their difference, the threat they pose to homogeneity clashes with their literary existence as we transform them into white characters or fail to see their color as anything but an exotic accident.

Literature does not evolve in a vacuum. We don't pretend it does. We advise our students to be familiar with a model of the Globe theatre and learn a bit about life in early modern England while they read Shakespeare. We discuss American Romanticism as an outgrowth of the literary space created by Wordsworth and Shelley,

yet African-American literature would seem to be a uniquely circumscribed enterprise, since one rarely sees Anna Julia Cooper in a survey of feminist literature or Pauline Hopkins side-by-side with Mark Twain. American literature itself is a search for identity. To paraphrase Morrison, the much-celebrated notion of freedom in America cannot help but call forth the specter of slavery, and therefore the black body. One cannot achieve normalcy without the Other to compare oneself to.

Slavery in America shattered American identity into tiny fragments, as American writers of all races and both genders struggle to discover identity, but attempt to do so without healing the old wounds. Anna Julia Cooper, Frances E. W. Harper, and Pauline E. Hopkins found in Shakespeare not only a kindred spirit, but also a way to reclaim that shattered self.

In many ways I believe the history of African-Americans resonates like a Sophoclean tragedy in this country. We must "rattle our chains" and look back at those who endured slavery with an encoded, double-voiced identity and those who found identity only in killing themselves or their families, choosing to leave a bloody handprint as proof of their worth. African-American literature is a tale told with many voices, full of sound and fury, Signifyin(g) greatness.

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