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Title:
Janet Schaw and the Complexions of Empire

Date:
2003

Citation:
COLEMAN, D. (2003). Janet Schaw and the Complexions of Empire. Eighteenth-Century Studies, 36 (2), pp.169-193. <https://doi.org/10.1353/ecs.2003.0010>.

Publication Status:
Published

Persistent Link:
<https://hdl.handle.net/11343/34602>

JANET SCHAW AND THE COMPLEXIONS OF EMPIRE

Deirdre Coleman

The late-eighteenth-century British public's fascination with complexion can be seen as symptomatic of the period's preoccupation with a new identity and status for Afro-Britons following Lord Mansfield's decision in the Somerset case (1772), in which a slave-owner was denied the right to deport his slave, James Somerset, back to the colonies. Although Lord Mansfield repeatedly emphasized that his ruling did not mean that slaves in Britain were free,¹ this was the popular belief, and the judge became the toast of London's black population.² The Jamaican planter and white supremacist Edward Long was the first to respond to Judge Mansfield's ruling, in a pamphlet entitled *Candid Reflections* (1772). Playing on the fear that the nation, overrun by freed blacks, will become "embronzed with the African tint," Long lets the West Indian bogey of widespread racial intermixture loose in Britain.³ Equally prominent in this tract, though less remarked, is Long's focus on "whiteness" and "whitening." The idea of whiteness can be seen most obviously in the title's pun on "candid," with the process of whitening appearing shortly afterwards in the Preface's jibe against Mansfield. The supposedly impossible act of "washing the Black-a-moor white" had, Long jeered, been performed by "a lawyer."⁴

The aim of this essay is to bring into greater prominence the racialization of whiteness in the 1760s and 1770s, both in the metropolis and in the colonies,

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and to relate this racialization of skin color to gender. A highly charged discourse about whiteness and whitening, circulating already in travel narratives and colonial histories, is given a new focus in the wake of the Somerset decision, then gathers further momentum during the heyday of abolitionism. Indeed, the racialization of whiteness forms an important cultural context for reading later abolitionist texts and for understanding how gender increasingly came to encode ideas of racial difference. The texts of the 1760s and 1770s that receive particular attention in the first three sections of my essay are Edward Long's *Candid Reflections* (1772), his massive *History of Jamaica* (1774), John Singleton's *A General Description of the West-Indian Islands* (1767), and most importantly for my overall argument, Janet Schaw's *Journal of a Lady of Quality*, a travel diary of the West Indian and American colonies begun in 1774, the same year in which Long published his *History*.⁵ The final section of the essay addresses the formative impact of this earlier discourse on several abolitionist writers of the 1780s and 1790s, including Thomas Clarkson and Thomas Beddoes.

Long's writings have recently taken center stage in Roxann Wheeler's important book, *The Complexion of Race*, while Schaw's text has also been attracting attention, principally because of its narrator's robust, even nonchalant, endorsement of plantation slavery and her depiction of "Negroes" as mere brutes, well equipped for the bodily sufferings of the whip on account of their imperviousness to mental suffering.⁶ Singleton's text is, on the contrary, little known. What all three writers share is an intent focus on issues concerning white complexions in the colonies, giving the lie to Thomas DiPiero's recent claim that whiteness is a fixed and indivisible category in eighteenth-century travel books: "No European observer lists varieties or shades of whiteness."⁷ But while whiteness in the colonies is foregrounded in ways that differ from the representation of whiteness in the metropolis, what is of greater interest is the way in which the meaning of whiteness differs between colonies. In Schaw's narrative, for instance, whiteness in the West Indies is different from whiteness in the rebellious American colonies. In focusing on the different meanings of whiteness between, as well as within colonies, this essay aims to contribute to the cultural history of the British empire in the eighteenth century.

Uncovering the racialization of whiteness in the 1770s also brings into sharper focus Felicity Nussbaum's recent claims concerning the apparent elusiveness and impermanence of complexion, particularly in relation to women.⁸ The "slippery shades of Otherness," to use her phrase, can certainly be seen in the proliferation of metaphors of whitening and blackening during the last two decades of the eighteenth century, when metropolitan culture became increasingly agitated about its complicity in the cruelties of the slave trade. Abolitionists and progressives like Samuel Taylor Coleridge fulminated against the rhetorically whitening "cosmetics" employed by politicians "to conceal the deformities of a commerce, which is blotched all over with one leprosy of evil."⁹ Others argued that Britain had become "blackened" through its multiple and deeply embedded connections with empire. Sugar boycott pamphlets, addressed primarily to women, abound in rhetoric in which the boundaries blur between black/white, civilized/barbaric, metropolis/colony, master/slave.¹⁰ In order to unravel the formation of this discourse it is necessary to return to those texts of the 1760s and

1770s, written by slavery's apologists, many of whose definitions of racial boundaries, while ostensibly rigid, are actually very fluid. The discourse surrounding whitening presents an especially flamboyant instance of this fluidity. It can even stand as a metonym of the alienated nature of colonial experience in general—an expression of deep-seated racial insecurities within Britain's white Creole communities, where whiteness was not necessarily a positive signifier. That the discourse of whitening should primarily centre upon the figure of the white Creole woman, as I will demonstrate in the first two sections, adds yet another dimension to our understanding of what Nussbaum has identified as the “other” woman of empire.¹¹

THE “IMPIOUS ACT” OF WHITENING

Edward Long's sarcasm about English law suddenly “washing the Black-a-moor white” arose from his experience of the very slow and heavily circumscribed manner in which freedom was granted to blacks and mulattos in the West Indies,¹² but the phrase also carried a charged sexual allusion, namely, to the process whereby white men copulated with their mixed-race offspring over several generations, with the object of producing “pure” white progeny.¹³ But at the same time that Long invokes in *Candid Reflections* a white supremacist fantasy involving many generations of interracial and interfamilial breeding, he alludes to something much more instantaneous in its effects: a “stupendous transfiguration” wrought by a “new specific lotion” that had caused Britain's blacks to “almost jump out of their skins for joy.”¹⁴ The profound delight of the large numbers of blacks who had sat through the lengthy court hearings of the Somerset case was widely reported in the press,¹⁵ but the joyful jumping out of their skins is Long's sarcastic allusion to the violent and painful practice of flaying or skinning the body with astringent lotions in order to achieve whiteness. One well-publicized example of this practice in the 1770s was the “Mungo Macaroni” Julius Soubise, born into slavery on St. Kitts but adopted into high society by the Duchess of Queensberry, who made him her black servant. As a fashionable man-about-town, Soubise allegedly washed himself white with corrosive “washes, cosmetics, and other beautifying medicines,”¹⁶ a practice associated with the West Indies, though not exclusively with its black and mulatto populations. In his highly popular poem *The Sugar Cane* (1764), James Grainger discreetly revealed that West Indian white women were also reputed to dabble in skin whitening. In a scientific footnote describing the various properties of the cashew nut, Grainger mentions the use of its highly caustic oil “as a cosmetic by the ladies, to remove freckles and sun-burning; but the pain they necessarily suffer makes its use not very frequent.”¹⁷ A few years before Grainger, a Jamaican doctor, Patrick Browne, had given a more scandalous and violent dimension to whiteness in the West Indies by claiming that the white Creole women were continuously “flaying their faces with the caustic oil of the cashew-nut, in order to acquire a new skin.”¹⁸

If whitening is a process enabling blacks to pass as white, what meaning can be given to the allegation that white women in Britain's West Indian colonies were also whitening themselves? There are many answers for this, the most grandiose being the contradictory entanglement of the Enlightenment with the slave trade. The “liberal” slaveholder Bryan Edwards, member of the Jamaican Assem-

bly and then of the House of Commons, exemplifies the interdependence of slavery and freedom in the Enlightenment by arguing (*pace* Edmund Burke) that freedom was truly noble only among the white plantocracy, where it was regarded as a kind of “rank” and “privilege” rather than the common blessing that so often looked like servitude in “free” countries.¹⁹ In Edwards’s *The History, Civil and Commercial, of the West Indies* (1793), skin color is an integral component of that white hegemony and rule, the all-important marker distinguishing “freedom from slavery” in plantation society.²⁰ This link between shades of whiteness and degrees of freedom and nobility was also conspicuous in South America’s caste-ridden society, where “the greater or less degree of whiteness of skin decides the rank which man occupies in society. . . . When a common man disputes with one of the titled lords of the country, he is frequently heard to say, ‘Do you think me not so white as yourself?’”²¹ Thus, we might argue that, if white Creole women used cashew nut oil on their faces, they did so in order to preserve an “aristocracy of skin.”²² By flaying their faces they heightened their perception of themselves as a caste apart, free and noble.²³

But insofar as whipping or flaying was the *modus operandi* of plantation slavery, and whitening a practice principally associated with the aspirations of “colored” rather than white people,²⁴ the spectacle of white women colonists flaying their skin was liable to be interpreted as proof not of their difference from black slaves, and from black women in particular, but of their uncanny resemblance to them. Indeed, as the very act of whitening indicates, the problem with complexion is that it is an unstable boundary marker, and this instability became increasingly problematic as polygenists like Edward Long, who believed in an essential distinction between the black and white “species,” began to challenge monogenists in the eighteenth century.²⁵ In 1774 Oliver Goldsmith had reaffirmed the “ancient opinion” of monogenism that complexion was modified by climate, an opinion ridiculed by Edward Long in his *History of Jamaica*, when he instanced the common belief in England that “children born in Jamaica of white parents turn swarthy, through the effect of the climate” and some even “converted into black-a-moors.” His explanation of the origin of such foolish views did nothing, however, to reassure his English readers that they could always confidently distinguish between themselves and colonial “others”: “The many Mulatto, Quateron, and other illegitimate children sent over to England for education . . . are often sent to the most expensive public schools, where the history of their birth and parentage is entirely unknown; they pass under the general name of West-Indians; and the bronze of their complexion is ignorantly ascribed to the fervour of the sun in the torrid zone.”²⁶ Like the equivocal term “Creole,” which carries no connotation of color, “the general name of West-Indians” is also color-neutral, admitting the full spectrum of complexions, from African black to European white, and all the shades in between.²⁷ But as the passage makes clear, racial identity is not simply an accident of nomenclature, but is contingent upon social and cultural perceptions. Racial identity is also crucially related to the issue of widespread miscegenation in the West Indies. Peter Hulme has argued of St. Vincent in the late eighteenth century, such were the effects of cultural mixing, or transculturation, that it was difficult to tell who anybody was by simply looking at them.²⁸ Long himself, in the section on “Freed Blacks and Mulattos” in his

History of Jamaica, conceded that the mulattos' aspiration to "mend their complexion still more by intermixture with the Whites" eventually led to numbers of them becoming legally "white." Certain "descendants of the Negro blood," namely Quinterons, were, Long informed his public, "entitled to all the rights and liberties of white subjects."²⁹ Regrettably for Long, this blurring of white/black identities took the wind out of his assurance that, whereas in England people might tolerate socially the "yellow brood" of West Indians, in the West Indies "so great is the distinction kept up between white and mixed complexions, that very seldom are they seen together in a familiar way, though every advantage of dress or fortune should centre with the latter."³⁰

White Creole anxiety concerning the related topics of complexion and national identity can be seen in Ann Brodbelt's letters from Jamaica to her daughters in England. A Jamaican-born Creole who married well, Brodbelt bowed to the custom of sending her daughters to England for the reestablishment of their complexions—allegedly from tropical sallowness to the red and white roses of the classic English complexion. Commenting in 1789 on a recent portrait of her two daughters, Jane and Nancy, Brodbelt writes: "Nancy's face has altered very little . . . she is drawn with a fine skin and complexion, the first she has always had and the latter I daresay she now has." Given that Nancy, Jane's elder sister, was near the end of her "finishing" in England, the improvement in her complexion was to be expected, whereas the more recently arrived Jane was still in the process of forging her English identity. "[Y]our skin is greatly cleared and your lips red but no colour as yet in your cheeks," her solicitous mother commented. Three months later she was able to write triumphantly to Jane of the rumor "that you have now got the complexion of an English girl."³¹ For better or for worse, adaptation to the tropical climate was an unavoidable feature of colonial life. But the question was always, at what level did the changes occur? Bryan Edwards argued carefully that the West Indian climate displayed itself "more strongly on the persons of the Natives, than on their manners, or on the faculties of their minds." Attempting to strike a balance between gains and losses, he focused on external and superficial differences, praising white Creole men as tall, supple, and graceful, but criticizing them for not having sufficient bulk to meet British ideas "of masculine beauty." That some changes went disturbingly deeper than others can be seen in his passing comment that, in order to shield their eyes from the sun's glare, the eye sockets of white Creoles were "deeper than among the Natives of Europe."³²

The challenge for white West Indians lay in maintaining their whiteness against the numerous assaults of creolization, such as physical adaptation to the tropical climate, interracial sex, or the misleading signifiers of "dress or fortune" (as Long put it). All these processes differ significantly, however, from the "stupendous transfiguration" into whiteness achieved by whitening lotions. As Tassie Gwilliam has argued so well, any hint that difference might be a matter of surface rather than deep anatomical structure threatens the very foundation of slavery in the opposition between black and white.³³ The tension between surface and depth can be seen very clearly in Long, who, while committed to the biology of race and the theory of polygenesis, was nevertheless too close and too astute an observer of West Indian life not to note the tendency of creolization to blur the boundaries

between racial identities. For instance, Long may have vehemently rejected Browne's allegation concerning white women flaying their faces with cashew nut oil,³⁴ but he shared the view of many other commentators on the West Indies that domestic life, "Creole style," involved an unseemly intimacy of white women with large numbers of black attendants, the typical young white Creole woman lolling around in imitation of her "Negro" servants, he wrote, "gobbling pepper-pot, seated on the floor, with her sable hand-maids around her." He also complained about the pervasive habit of putting white children out to "Negro" or mulatto wet nurses,³⁵ a concern shared by John Singleton in his *General Description of the West-Indian Islands*, first published in Barbados in 1767, then in London in 1776, at the start of the American revolution.

Singleton's poem is a strange amalgam of topographical description and negrophobic hysteria, punctuated regularly by moralizing passages of "advice" to the West Indian ladies ("Know then, ye fair . . ."). Singleton believed that, far removed from the orgies and "gay illuminations" of large corrupt cities, West Indian women enjoyed a fairer prospect than their European sisters of becoming "sober matrons" and "happy wives," but these advantages were offset by the pitfalls of succumbing to "negroefied" customs.³⁶ Alarmed at such a spectacle, the poet urges his white, female readers to separate themselves from the "Negro" race as much as possible, warning them especially against black wet nurses and arguing that the "sable pap's/Infectious juice" will contaminate the child for life with the "num'rous vices of the fost'ring slave." Singleton's chief injunction to his fair readers is, however, reserved for the "desperate act of skinning the hands and face," a warning that arises directly out of a consideration of the islands' notorious sexual culture. The well-known sexual truancy of the white West Indian husband, "[t]oo oft allur'd by Ethiopic charms," provokes in his wife "heart-rending jealousy and love," and a resort to desperate measures. Singleton urges his fair readers:

. . . above all, one impious act avoid,
 If you wou'd beauteous live belov'd of man,
 Ne'er steal in secret to remote abodes,
 The desp'rate experiment to try
 Of adding roses to the sallow cheek;
 Rather the freckled skin submissive bear,
 Or face imbrown'd by Sol's irradiant beam,
 Than practice such unwarrantable arts,
 By fiends devis'd, by wrinkled hags perform'd,
 With hellish spells, and damn'd ingredients stor'd.
 And ye, experienc'd dames, for shame, desist,
 Nor urge, by bold audacious speech profane,
 The faultless fair to mend the work of God.
 Fond nymph, what beauty does thy suff'rings add,
 What charm increase, t'attract the lover's eye?
 Know ye the mighty hazard which ye run
 To gain the slight complexion of a day?
 If chance the trickling tears shou'd plenteous start,
 Impell'd by horrid pains, till then unfelt;
 Or if the foul infernal mask shou'd turn,
 Thy native beauty is for ever lost,
 And in its stead distorted features rise . . .³⁷

Singleton provides more gruesome details in a footnote, noting that “before the skin or mask of the face comes off, it turns black, and the person so suffering becomes an horrid spectacle, being unable to smile, or even speak, or taste any sustenance but through a quill.”³⁸ The cause of this self-inflicted suffering is, Singleton tells us, the widespread concubinage of white men with black women, although why white women should strive to be even whiter when their menfolk clearly preferred dark women, remains something of a puzzle. Most curious of all, however, is the image of white skin/white mask dissolving into a blackness of profound pain and horror, an image that appears to conjure up deep anxieties about paternity in the racially mixed society of the islands—namely the scandalous possibility of white women’s sexual relations with black slaves.

Singleton’s dramatic representation of the skinning ritual, supervised and encouraged by older, witchlike women with malevolent potions, suggests that the ritual functions as a cover for infanticide or for the application of abortifacients;³⁹ certainly the ritual had a reputation for extreme secrecy, with Patrick Browne describing the women undergoing treatment as “obliged to refrain from all manner of company and conversation, and to keep in close confinement.”⁴⁰ On this reading, young white women collude with hags to destroy their mixed-race fetuses, the aim being to preserve the privileges of their whiteness and that of their legitimate offspring. In aborting themselves, however, white women were again behaving like their black counterparts, for it was a common explanation of black women’s low fertility that their promiscuity led them to “take specifics to cause abortion, in order that they may continue their trade without loss of time, or hindrance of business.”⁴¹ Also fueling the gothic imagery of Singleton’s passage is the longstanding association of astringents with sexual deception and with the recovery of maidenhood,⁴² an especially pungent idea in the context of the overtly sexualized tropics. The astringent properties of the West Indian cassava fruit provide a good laugh in Edward Ward’s comical *Trip to Jamaica* (1698), a satirical text about a group of emigrants intent on patching up their decayed fortunes in the wealthy island of Jamaica. Of the cassava fruit, the narrator jokes that while “soft and very Juicy,” the flesh was “so great an Acid, and of a Nature so Restraining, that by Eating of one, it drew up my Mouth like a *Hens Fundament* . . . From whence I conjecture, they are a much fitter Fruit to recover *Lost Maidenheads*, properly apply’d, than to be Eaten.”⁴³

Singleton’s sensationalist discourse of skinning is a classic instance of “the anxiety-ridden horizon of colonialism” recently elaborated by Alan Bewell in *Romanticism and Colonial Disease* (1999). More specifically, the passage graphically demonstrates the centrality of the female body’s reproductive capacities to constructions of empire, as elaborated by Felicity Nussbaum in *Torrid Zones* (1995).⁴⁴ In a mixed-race society in which women can never be pure or white enough, the relatively straightforward and superficial removal of sallowness and of freckles and sunspots gives way to mysterious and secretive rituals, wanton self-mutilation, and the profound instability of the categories “black” and “white.” The topic of skinning, of becoming whiter than white, also unleashes in Singleton (as it did in Browne, who claimed his female patients cast their skins, in imitation of “snakes and adders”⁴⁵) a misogynist vision of woman as a series of surfaces with no depth. As Edmund Burke would later argue, picking up on *The Specta-*

tor's well-known definition of woman as "an animal delighting in finery," women were nothing but animals or savages underneath, once their "pleasing illusions" were stripped away.⁴⁶

JANET SCHAW'S "BROWN BEAUTY"

In the journal of her travels to the West Indies and North America between October 1774 and the end of 1776, Janet Schaw makes some pointed remarks about white Creole women and their complexions, but unlike Singleton, who pathologizes the West Indies as a strange, tropical location in which white settlers seem dangerously touched by the sun, Schaw is determined to present white West Indian colonists in the very best light. There were several reasons for Schaw's voyage: her brother Alexander Schaw had been appointed Customs Officer on St. Kitts, and there was to be a reunion with a long-lost brother, Robert Schaw, a plantation owner who lived with his American wife on a property just north of Wilmington, North Carolina.⁴⁷ One of the compelling features of Schaw's *Journal* is its marked contrast between the peace, plenty, and prosperity of the West Indies and an America moving rapidly toward fragmentation and an escalation of hostilities with Britain. The party stayed only briefly in the West Indies before sailing on to America, the plan being to return to the sugar islands as soon as business was at an end. As it turned out, Alexander Schaw never took up his post on St. Kitts. Instead, he was hastily sent home from America, bearing dispatches from the Governor of North Carolina warning Lord Dartmouth of the rapidly deteriorating situation in the Carolinas and outlining plans for the invasion and military subjection of the Southern colonies (*Journal*, 266–7).

Schaw and her party sailed into Brunswick, North Carolina, in mid-February 1775, only three months before Edmund Burke gloomily concluded: "All our prospects of American reconciliation are, I fear over. Blood has been shed. The sluice is open . . ."⁴⁸ Schaw did not share Burke's regret. A staunch loyalist, she was a keen supporter of those who advocated force in dealing with the American rebels. Indeed, her firm views can be seen on an entire range of topics, from the lashings of slaves to the lavish dinner parties of Antiguan plantation owners. A single woman in her late thirties, Schaw proudly presents herself as untrammelled by the multiple and intricate codes governing the behavior of younger women. For instance, when she first arrives in Antigua, she strikes up a flirtatious exchange with a Mr. Baird, a bachelor "far from handsome" and on the wrong side of sixty, but as their "mutual passion . . . is not raised on beauty, it is to be hoped [it] will be lasting" (*Journal*, 82). She is also dismissive of the prescriptions surrounding femininity, boasting at one point to her correspondent: "You have formed a very wrong idea of my delicacy. I find I can put it on and off like any piece of dress" (*Journal*, 201). This alert and cavalier attitude towards the performative aspects of femininity flows on into her observations about the bizarre pathologies of the color line in the West Indies.

Like Long, who feared the threat of racial contamination to the islands' stability, Schaw appreciated the need for a *cordon sanitaire* around the white enclave, an ambition symbolized by the long "hickory handle" of the ornate water cup offered to her, "lest the breath of the Servant who presents it should contaminate its purity" (*Journal*, 111). Her fixed views on the essential differences

between black and white and the need for their strict separation did not, however, preclude some account of the role of climate and cultural practice in accounts of human difference and variation. For instance, she comments on the indolence and spiritlessness of white Creole women, a cliché of life in the tropics, where, following Montesquieu, the hot climate was believed to bring about a relaxation of the body's nerve endings.⁴⁹ Newly arrived in the tropics and priding herself on her rejection of irrational "custom," Schaw mocks the women's preference for lime juice over a stiffening draught of Madeira: "What a tyrant is custom in every part of the world. The poor women, whose spirits must be worn out by heat and constant perspiration, require no doubt some restorative, yet as it is not the custom, they will faint under it rather than transgress this ideal law. I will however follow our good Landlady's advice, and as I was resolved to shew I was to be a rebel to a custom that did not appear founded on reason, I pledged her in a bumper of the best Madeira I ever tasted" (*Journal*, 81). Despite her criticism of the ladies here, Schaw stopped well short of Montesquieu's scandalous claim about nerve relaxation, namely, that it led to hypersexuality,⁵⁰ a stereotype comically deployed in *The Jamaica Lady* (1720), in which it is complained that in the Jamaican climate, "a Vestal becomes a Messalina within forty-eight hours of landing" and that a longer residence of five years was "time long enough, not only to tincture, but to change her whole mass of Blood, and totally alter her Nature."⁵¹ Flying in the face of such stereotypes, Schaw brusquely states that in the West Indies "[t]he sun appears to affect the sexes very differently." While the men are "gay, luxurious, and amorous," with the all too visible result of "crouds of Mullatoes" everywhere, the women are "modest, genteel, reserved, and temperate." This last virtue, temperance, the women possessed (Schaw notes somewhat contradictorily) "in the extreme . . . they drink nothing stronger in general than Sherbert, and never eat above one or two things at table, and these the lightest and plainest" (*Journal*, 112–3).⁵²

With Britain's empire in America about to fall apart, Schaw resolutely plays down certain well-known, negative features of life in the West Indies, namely the white male population's adultery and libertinism and the resulting widespread miscegenation that so threatened the integrity and coherence of Britain's colonies.⁵³ Even Long, slavery's greatest apologist, was obliged to reflect negatively upon the "intemperance and sensuality" of Jamaican white men, a lifestyle that sent most of them to an early grave, leaving a large number of rich "young widows, who are greedily snapped up . . . as soon as the weeds are laid aside."⁵⁴ In marked contrast, Schaw avoids censuring the men for their promiscuity, preferring instead to view them as victims of the sun and of the "young black wenches" who "lay themselves out for white lovers." Her general opinion of the white Creole men was extremely favorable: "I think the men the most agreeable creatures I ever met with, frank, open, generous . . . brave . . . handsome . . . In short . . . the woman that *brings a heart here* will have little sensibility if she carry it away" (*Journal*, 111–12). In other words, despite their residence in a zone of the world associated with "burning ardours," Creole men maintain their civilized, northern gallantry.⁵⁵

Eager to identify national and racial continuities with the white West Indians she meets, Schaw nevertheless cannot help but be struck by the "other-

ness” of the islands’ people, in particular the white Creole women. Despite her official stance, that she “never admired [her] own sex more than in these amiable creoles,” she cannot deny the strangeness, otherness, and vulnerability of these women.⁵⁶ This otherness is writ large in their oppositional relationship to the tropical environment, symbolized by their close masking and bonneting against the sun: “From childhood they never suffer the sun to have a peep at them, and to prevent him are covered with masks and bonnets, that absolutely make them look as if they were stewed” (*Journal*, 114–15). Schaw reflects negatively on the women’s unhealthy pallor, the result of a cultivated whiteness of complexion that she clearly regards as yet another irrational West Indian custom. Instead of setting their faces against the weather, as Schaw boasts of doing (*Journal*, 115), the plantation women of Antigua entirely exclude themselves “from proper air and exercise” and wear masks to protect themselves from the sun’s rays. There are many descriptions of this custom of wearing masks, including one by Long who claimed that the “Creole white ladies” adopted the practice from free mulatto women. Both groups never “venture a journey,” Long writes, “without securing their complexions with a brace of handkerchiefs; one of which being tied over the forehead, the other under the nose, and covering the lower part of the face, formed a compleat helmet.”⁵⁷ Schaw’s dislike of these masks becomes evident when Fanny Rutherford, her traveling companion and a young woman of marriageable age, succumbs to the local custom: “Fanny, who just now is blooming as a new blown rose, was prevailed on to wear a mask, while we were on our Tour, which in a week changed her colour, and if she had persevered I am sure a few months would have made her as pale as any of them” (*Journal*, 114–15).

It is a curious and pernicious feature of the mask Fanny Rutherford wears that it functions not so much to preserve whiteness from tropical sallowness as artificially to produce whiteness. The “new blown rose” redness of Fanny’s complexion—her natural color, so to speak—is changed to white, and prolonged subjection to the mask would have rendered her (Schaw believes) indistinguishable from all the Creole women in the West Indies. At this point, the cover functions less like a bonnet preserving the complexion from any taint than a cosmetic, a bleaching mask that functions as an additive, like ceruse (white lead), or as a peeling agent, with the power of stripping back the skin to reveal an untainted, whiter skin underneath. But whichever the mode of operation—by adding or by taking away—these whitening masks denaturalize whiteness. And while their objective may be to enhance the difference between black and white, they in fact have the opposite effect, of effacing difference: Fanny’s identity as fellow-Scot is on the brink of absorption into that of the West Indian Creole.

The plurality of whiteness in Schaw’s journal can be seen in her description of her own whiteness as a type of “brown beauty” in comparison with the Creole women’s carefully guarded lily paleness.⁵⁸ Furthermore, her attention to the extreme whiteness of the Creole women’s complexions marks whiteness as a racial category—one as conspicuous as the other complexions seen everywhere around her: the black and the yellow, or mulatto. Schaw’s characterization of herself as a weathered “brown beauty” has something to do with her maturity: it is the well-bodied Madeira she enjoys, after all, not the pale lime juice. Also, as a Scottish woman with family connections in the American and West Indian colo-

nies, “brown” reflects Schaw’s diasporic, non-English identity.⁵⁹ Nevertheless, “brown beauty” also belongs to an established category of acceptable English-woman’s whiteness, such as that of Beatrice, the “sunburnt” and highly intelligent heroine of Shakespeare’s *Much Ado About Nothing*, who jokes, “I may sit in a corner and cry ‘Heigh-ho for a husband’.”⁶⁰ Schaw’s reference to her “brown beauty” is thus not so much a self-deprecating gesture as a proud declaration of a healthy and rational adherence to the middle way of British beauty, as opposed to an extreme and overzealous aspiration toward pure whiteness. Finally, brown is the sign of Schaw’s emancipation from the artificiality and oppressive commodification of women’s beauty commonly associated with metropolitan culture, an emancipation that in turn facilitates her encounter in the West Indies not just with difference, but with *white* difference.

On St. Kitts, the “aristocracy of skin” is foremost in Schaw’s first glimpse of Lady Isabella Hamilton, a long-standing and dear friend who was not a Creole but who had been living on the island for four years. In order, presumably, to accentuate her new role and setting, Lady Isabella enacts the visual trope of white noblewoman and pet black for their reunion.⁶¹ Schaw records that she “had standing by her a little Mulatto girl not above five years old, whom she retains as a pet. This brown beauty was dressed out like an infant sultana, and is a fine contrast to the delicate complexion of her Lady” (*Journal*, 124). They then embark on a tour of sugar production, “one of the prettiest branches of the British trade,” Schaw notes. Their visit to a boiling house goes beyond mere sightseeing, however; Lady Isabella “had another design . . . There were several of the boilers condemned to the lash, and seeing her face is pardon” (*Journal*, 129). Lady Isabella turns and reveals (perhaps unveils) her white face, in a scene reminiscent of the miraculous intercession of saints, such as the Virgin Mary. The passage reveals slave society’s powerful investment of civic order in whiteness, so much so that the color becomes a talisman. Unlike the unseen, sequestered Hindu and Muslim women of many eighteenth-century travel narratives, whose faces have no currency in public, the white face of the plantation owner’s wife possesses uncanny powers.

In this episode in the boiling house, the crime that warrants the lash is the slaves’ “neglect of their own health . . . the greatest fault they can commit,” Schaw adds. Ironically, the white face that has intervened to save them from their miserable fate is itself the sign of ill health; for while the features of her dear friend remain “unaltered,” Schaw is forced to concede that the same cannot be said of Lady Isabella’s complexion: although she is “as beautiful as ever . . . the lily has far got the better of the rose” during her four years’ residence in the West Indies (*Journal*, 122). Thus, while the mask preserves racial privilege in plantation society, its role in enhancing sexual attractiveness is questionable. The language of beauty that equates whiteness with fairness, blackness with ugliness or sexual promiscuity, does not apply to West Indian society, for aesthetically the women are too white to be fair. Of course there is the disconcerting effect of looking “stewed” (sweaty) under bonnets and masks. But the unnatural lily-white pallor of continuous masking, the rigid, inflexible obsession with purity of blood and whiteness, needs to be seen as the irrational symptom of a society that is in fact too fluid, too given to racial and sexual intermixture. And it is this fluidity that was leading to an inauthentic whitening of the population, making it sometimes

impossible to distinguish between “real” and imitation whites.⁶² According to one commentator, some Quadroons were “as fair as some whites, but rather delicate and sickly inclined.” While taking comfort in what would appear to be the Quadroons’ dim prospects for long-term survival as a species, the author of this remark, J. B. Moreton, then contradicted himself by baldly asserting his confidence in the long-term efficacy of the one-drop rule: such “Mongrels, though thirty generations distant from blacks blood, cannot be real whites,” he claimed, as though the invisible stain of blackness would always come to light and be recognized as such.⁶³

Hilary Beckles has argued that “the linking of white womanhood to the reproduction of freedom meant that the entire ideological fabric of the slave-based civilization was conceived in terms of sex, gender, and race.” His archival research shows that whereas there were numerous instances of white women bearing children to black men in the early eighteenth century, the sexuality of white Creole women was more strictly policed from midcentury onward, with castration, dismemberment, and execution introduced as punishments for black men involved with white women.⁶⁴ Certainly, by the 1770s, Schaw’s narrative strongly reflects the view that the future of the colony’s British race lies in the sexual purity and virtue of its white women. In contrast to so many descriptions of the dirt and disorderliness of Creole home life and the notorious “housekeeping” system in which white men lived with “colored” women,⁶⁵ Schaw assures us that the women she meets are “excellent wives, fond attentive mothers and the best house wives. . . . Those of the first fortune and fashion keep their own keys and look after every thing within doors; the domestick Economy is entirely left to them” (*Journal*, 113).⁶⁶

Long had a rich vocabulary for describing the offspring of the islands’ “disorderly connexions” between white and black; in comparison with pure whites who constituted “a race of unadulterated beings,” mulattos were a “tawney breed,” “a tarnished train of beings,” his favorite color for their complexion being “yellow” or “sallow.”⁶⁷ If Schaw suspected that the hyper-whiteness of the Creole women masked racial “impurity,” she drops no hint of it, idealizing them instead as a caste apart, with a strong group identity free of rivalry, never even gossiping or speaking ill of each other (*Journal*, 113).⁶⁸ Buttoned-up and de-eroticized, they enact the insulation of white women demanded by plantation patriarchy, although the vulnerability of their racial status is all too legibly written on their too white faces. The threatening absorptive power of blackness is everywhere around them in the crowds of ever-whitening mulattos, leaving the small band of white women vulnerable to the external threat as though it were an internal one. Masking against the sun’s blackening of complexions was one way of keeping the mulatto at bay. That the white women nevertheless are determined to rise above the humiliation caused by their adulterous husbands can be seen in Schaw’s final, extraordinary observation, that “a jealous wife would be here a most ridiculous character” (*Journal*, 113–4). Thus, while the men endanger racial purity and cultural identity by interracial mixture, the women uphold white prestige and are the safekeepers of colonial morality. For all Schaw’s ambivalence about these women, officially they are the ideological bearers of whiteness; they are the ones entrusted with the future of their community and with the integrity and cohesiveness of its ethnic

and cultural identity. For Schaw, as for Long and Moreton, the community without a future is the mixed-race one. The light-skinned mulatto child may be a status symbol for the predatory young black wenches, Schaw writes, but because the "child interrupts their pleasures and is troublesome, they have certain herbs and medicines, that free them from such an encumbrance" (*Journal*, 112). Contrary to the suggestion of Singleton, Schaw claims that it is black, not white, women who dabble in the dark arts of infanticide and abortion. This invidious contrast between bad (black) and good (white) mothering is part and parcel of Schaw's emphasis on absolute difference. Because of the dangerous fluidity she perceives in the West Indies, there is to be no countenancing in her text of shared maternal functions, such as the spectacle of black women suckling white babies, which had so disturbed Long and Singleton. In fact, Schaw so whitewashes the white women she meets that she anticipates later apologists for the slave system who categorically denied any possibility of white women's relations with black men. In his *History of the Island of Domenica* (1791), Thomas Atwood asserted (most improbably) that, compared to European women, who commonly formed "connections with negro men," such a thing was "so very odious in the opinion of Creole white women in general, that the most profligate of them would shudder at the bare idea of submitting to it; and there is hardly to be produced an instance of the kind in the West Indies."⁶⁹

TARRING AND FEATHERING

If Schaw's "brown beauty" prevails over spurious whiteness and is the sign of her maturity and emancipation from the strictures of metropolitan beauty, the coexistence in her narrative of that other "brown beauty," the exotic little mulatto girl in sultana masquerade, suggests some uncomfortable identifications, too. The memory of that visual trope of St. Kitts, with Lady Isabella Hamilton's white beauty offset by her mulatto servant, seems to have come to mind later in the dangerous frontier world of North Carolina, where, to Schaw's disgust, the collapse of white racial solidarity had brought about the hourly threat of slave insurrection.⁷⁰ The uneasiness and fear Schaw feels can be seen in the absurd figure she cuts amidst the dirt and disorderliness of Wilmington, a town with a large and restive black population.⁷¹ On her way to a ball, she describes herself as a figure of fun, "dressed out in all my British airs with a high head and a hoop and trudging thro' the unpaved streets in embroidered shoes by the light of a lanthorn carried by a black wench half naked. No chair, no carriage—good leather shoes need none. The ridicule was the silk shoes in such a place" (*Journal*, 154). The last comment attempts to contain the ridicule, but the very idea of Britishness—of British nationhood and of British race—is under threat in a country that has forgotten that the real "enemy" is not the white patriot or the white loyalist but the black slave. For this reason, the visual trope of St. Kitts backfires in Wilmington; instead of being empowered in sexual and colonial terms, as Lady Isabella had been, Schaw only looks all the more ridiculous alongside her black attendant, who with her lantern spotlights the absurdity of Schaw's embroidered silk shoes. Clearly, in the unstable world of North Carolina, black skin fails to function as a foil to whiteness and to noble bearing. The two worlds of America and the West Indies are also linked through the aesthetic of "ridicule," a "puzzled and vexed"

subject discussed by Lord Kames in his *Elements of Criticism* (1762), a book that traveled with Schaw and that she knew well (*Journal*, 44–5). For Kames, ridicule, involving circumstances “both risible and improper,” functions as a kind of reality test “for discovering whether a subject be really grave, or be made so artificially by custom and fashion.”⁷² In the West Indies, as we have seen, the figure of the jealous wife hovers (unrealized) as “a most ridiculous character” amidst the reality of widespread miscegenation; here in North Carolina, surrounded by rebellious slaves, Schaw herself becomes the ridiculous figure.⁷³

Schaw arrived in Wilmington in July 1775, soon after the town’s Committee of Safety decreed that all blacks should be disarmed and placed under lock and key at night and that patrols should be instituted to oversee the process. Schaw joked that she would shortly become a “glorious knapsack-bearer” herself, being obliged at one point to join one of these midnight patrols in order to cross safely from one end of town to the other (*Journal*, 201). Her analysis of North Carolinian society resembles her comments on the West Indian plantocracy to the extent that, in analyzing the sexes separately, she champions her own fair sex as the guarantors of the white colony’s future. From the early days onward, the British women settlers passed the values of civilization on to their American-born daughters, unlike the fathers who quickly lost “every art or science,” dedicated as they were to the hard labor of establishing the colony. The net result was a gross physicality among American men, so that “to be a good marksman is the highest ambition of youth, while to those enervated by age or infirmity drinking grog remained a last consolation” (*Journal*, 155).

Significantly, in terms of the racial discourse of her journal, the ever-present fear of slave insurrection is intertwined with the fear of being tarred, feathered, and whipped at the gallows, the disgusting punishment meted out by rebels to refractory loyalists.⁷⁴ In one cartoon, published several times in London just before Schaw set out on her journey, tarring and feathering in America was described as a “New Method of Macarony Making,”⁷⁵ a transfiguration from white to black through tar, then back to white through white feathers, the victim ironically citing Horace, “Album vector in Alitem &c” (“I am turned into a white bird”). If British loyalists are figured in this punishment as racially indeterminate, the term “Macarony” also implies sexual and national indeterminacy, the macaroni being a dandy dedicated to foreign fashions. In other words, unlike heterosexual American patriots, loyalists are displaced persons, operating outside clearly demarcated heterosexual and national definitions. In a rough, uncivilized country that called for “good leather shoes,” Schaw’s too feminine silk slippers loudly announce her “risible and improper” loyalism.

The prospect of being tarred and feathered hovers over Schaw’s journal from the start. On the journey out, she records a storm so violent that “a barrel of Molasses pitched directly on me, as did also a box of small candles, so I appeared as if tarred and feathered, stuck all over with farthing candles” (*Journal*, 52). Later, in North Carolina, she admits that she cannot look at native-born American white men “without connecting the idea of tar and feather” (*Journal*, 154), an idea connected in turn with the violence committed by these men upon the bodies of African women, manifest everywhere in miscegenated offspring—those touched by the tar brush of “Negro” blood.⁷⁶ For unlike the Creole white men of

Antigua, whose gallantry she had admired and whose promiscuity she had attempted to naturalize and condone as mere playfulness, the white Creole men of America were “savages” who cynically and brutally “couple with their black wenches in order to increase the number of their slaves” (*Journal*, 154). That on the night of the Wilmington ball she should find herself juxtaposed with one of those sexually mature, half-naked black wenches, rather than with an elaborately dressed, decorative, and prepubescent sultana, only intensifies her awkwardness and fearfulness that she is in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Whereas in the West Indies “[n]o Lady ever goes without a gentleman to attend her” (*Journal*, 87), Schaw finds herself alone on her way to the ball, with only a black slave to lighten her way through the mud. At this point her anxiety about restive “Negroes” merges with her fear of being tarred and feathered; racial fear mingles with the sexual fear of being waylaid and tar-brushed by one of the country’s restive slaves. Or perhaps she is anxious about being “tar-brushed” by one of the colony’s rebels, for she certainly regards the American revolutionaries as a different race. We see this clearly in the marriage of her brother, Robert Schaw. A planter and long-time resident of the colonies, Robert Schaw disapproved of the rebels and tried to stay aloof from the fray, but he was married to a thorough-going “American,” a woman who, according to Janet Schaw, “detested every thing that is European” and whose male relatives were leaders on the rebel side (*Journal*, 160, 188). The marriage of Scot and American, loyalist brother and rebel sister-in-law, has the risky, taboo air of interracial mixture in Schaw’s text, with tarring and feathering an almost certain outcome. The extent to which Schaw is dangerously implicated in her brother’s American marriage becomes clear when she meets a relative of her sister-in-law, Colonel Robert Howe. At the time of their meeting, Howe was a candidate for the command of the revolutionary army. An ardent rebel, he was also a well-known womanizer. Despite her political antipathy and his reputation for being “a woman-eater that devours every thing that comes in his way” (*Journal*, 167), Schaw was strongly attracted by Howe’s gentleman-like demeanor and “general polite gallantry” (*Journal*, 167). This did not, however, soften her political opposition to everything Howe represented. Through a stunt involving a reading from Shakespeare’s *Henry IV*, Schaw managed to cast ridicule on him and on the rebel cause in general, provoking Howe to whisper, seductively, “[Y]ou will certainly get yourself tarred and feathered; shall I apply to be executioner?” (*Journal*, 191)

Schaw’s flirtation here with the threat of tarring and feathering is remarkable, given the clear link in her mind between the blackening/whitening metamorphosis of this punishment and the ferocity of white American men in their coercive sexual relations with black women. Her provocative riling of Howe also follows immediately upon her witnessing of a “poor English groom . . . dragged forward, poor devil, frightened out of his wits” to be tarred and feathered by rebel soldiers for smiling at one of the local regiments. In the end he is spared, merely “drummed and fiddled out of town, with a strict prohibition of ever being seen in it again” (*Journal*, 190–1). The groom belonged to Archibald Neilson, a sensitive and anguished young Scotsman who served as secretary to the loyalist Governor. On first meeting the “vastly grave” Neilson, Schaw was less than impressed: “His wan meagre looks disgusted me, his white hands gave me great

offence, as I could not help thinking he displayed them ostentatiously" (*Journal*, 181). Here whiteness is allied to a macaroni-like effeminacy and indeterminacy of national allegiance, for Neilson, while a loyalist, also had some sympathy with the patriots' grievances against colonial rule.⁷⁷ Schaw's initial suspiciousness of Neilson was inevitable in an environment in which it was difficult to distinguish rebel from loyalist; even Howe was to come under suspicion for treason to the rebel cause.⁷⁸

For all that whiteness in the West Indies involves a certain amount of cover(ing)-up, the hegemony and dominance of West Indian Creoles is ostensibly secure in Schaw's narrative, hence the confident insouciance of her self-projection as a "brown beauty" and a "rebel" to irrational customs. But the easy performance of British brownness does not translate to the American colonies, where racial solidarity is falling apart. Of course the difficulty Schaw experiences in reading whiteness in America is also true of the West Indies, but Schaw refuses to acknowledge this. In succumbing to an overweening pride in national identity ("British airs") and to the trappings of an exaggerated femininity ("silk shoes"), Schaw transgresses the liberating limits associated with "brown beauty" and ends up failing to be fashionably white.

SKIN DEEP

Marcus Wood and Mary Favret have recently explored the links between flagellation and pornography in metropolitan antislavery prints and parliamentary discourse.⁷⁹ Less noted is the link between whipping or flogging and the paradoxical naming of whiteness through the obliteration of skin—a subject we have traced here in relation to white Creole women, obliquely in the case of Schaw, overtly in the texts of Grainger, Browne, and Singleton. This unnerving link between flogging and the discourses of whitening and blackening keeps cropping up during the later abolitionist period—for instance, in the slave-owner's tale (which so fascinated Coleridge in 1805) that "the Negroes often console themselves in their cruel punishments, that their wounds will become *white*,"⁸⁰ or in the notorious case of Joseph Wall, Governor of Goree, who in 1782 had a white soldier, Armstrong, flogged by six black men until his back looked "as black as a new hat."⁸¹ Allegations about white Creole women in the 1760s and 1770s provide a crucial context for understanding these later narratives.

In more general ways too, such as in the twinned theological and scientific preoccupation with the location and cause of skin color, it is important to take account of the racialization of whiteness bequeathed to abolitionists by the writers of the 1760s and 1770s. For instance, during the height of abolitionism in the 1780s, there was even a denial of any deep-seated, ineradicable differences between black and white complexions. The antislavery campaigner, Thomas Clarkson, typified prevailing monogenist beliefs when, in his eagerness to refute the perception of blackness as the color designate of slavery, he argued for a shared human nature, evidenced in the overlapping characteristics of white and black skin. Skin color was located in the upper surface, he argued, with the bottom layer, the cuticle, being semitransparent, so that "the cuticle of the blackest negro was of the same transparency and colour, as that of the purest white."⁸² He also argued, following earlier commentators, that the dark olive complexion was the primitive color, and that "*the purest white is as far removed from the primi-*

tive colour as the deepest black."⁸³ But the evenhandedness of this and Clarkson's praise for the "glossy and shining" qualities of black skin are troubled and undermined in his text by a longing to see black skin transformed into white skin. He categorically denied, for instance, that the blackness of Africans was "entirely ingrafted in their constitution and frame." Certainly, it was ingrafted to the extent "that their children wholly inherit it, if brought up in the same spot, but it is not so absolutely interwoven in their nature, that it cannot be removed, if they are born and settled in another." In the end, it was the sun acting on the *mucosum corpus* that made the difference for Clarkson; blackness was nothing more than a "universal freckle," and he was pleased to hear witnesses confirm Abbé Raynal's opinion that Africans born in America were "not so black as their parents were" and that soon there would be no distinguishing them from white people.⁸⁴

The establishment of a "cosmetic art" of skin bleaching was a major concern of Coleridge's radical friend, Dr. Thomas Beddoes, as can be seen in his many experiments in the 1780s with oxygenated air, some of which he conducted on himself and some on blacks, although he regretted that "in some situations it is not easy to procure a Negro, who will submit to become the subject of experiment." Failing to acquire full cooperation, he was nevertheless able to conduct some limited bleaching, first involving "a lock of Negro's hair recently cut from his head," which "in a short time became white with scarce any tinge of yellow. At another time I prevailed upon a Negro to introduce his arm into a large jar full of the same elastic fluid, at the bottom of which there lay a small quantity of water impregnated with it. The back of the fore finger and part of the second lay in this water. Knowing the prodigious efficacy of this air, I desired the man to withdraw his arm as soon as he should be sensible of any pain . . . The arm being now withdrawn and examined, there appeared over its whole surface something of a greyish cast, like the colour of ointment of quicksilver. But the two fingers . . . were remarkably changed. They had acquired very much the colour of white lead paint . . ." There were a number of imponderables, however, such as the duration of the new whiteness and the feasibility of conducting the experiment in reverse, that is, from white to black. In the end, Beddoes concluded that "a careful consideration of the resources of chemistry" would "furnish the European with the means of turning his skin black," for "we know that by keeping the light excluded, it may be rendered more delicately white."⁸⁵ While Beddoes does not appear to have tried to blacken either his own or anyone else's skin, he was notorious for his experiments in self-bleaching. In *The Golden Age: A Poetical Epistle from Erasmus D——n to Thomas Beddoes* (1794), an anonymous parody of political radicalism and optimistic views about science, Beddoes was described as making himself "very lean, very fair (his complexion having been before of an uniform brown), very pretty, and very consumptive, by the use of a 'Cosmetic' called *Oxygenous Air*."⁸⁶ As a monogenist and abolitionist and a fervent supporter of the new dawn offered by the French Revolution, presumably the point of Beddoes's experiment was to prove that skin color was only skin deep.⁸⁷

Felicity Nussbaum has described fictional women of color in the eighteenth century, such as Imoinda and Yarico, as "female noble savages" whose impermanent skin color and racial origin might be interpreted as an Enlightenment wish to claim an "inherent 'whiteness' of all humankind and the inadequacy

of pigmentation and physiognomic traits to reveal character.”⁸⁸ Another explanation canvassed by Nussbaum for the “essential similarity” among these women of color is the underplaying of difference *within* categories in order to establish it *between* categories, namely the difference between black and white women. Certainly this is the difference that Schaw is so keen to establish in Wilmington, a keenness that betrays her into that failed performance of whiteness. But there is also a quite distinct and deeply misogynistic body of writing on the “characters of women” that draws heavily on racist stereotypes in order to collapse the differences between black and white. Richard Steele’s *Spectator* story of Phillis and Brunetta (1711) is a case in point. A tale of bitter female rivalry that shifts from London to the West Indies for its ugly denouement, the story depicts the evaporation of women’s “pleasing illusions” into blackness and servitude. Born on the same day of the same year in London, Phillis and Brunetta (“the brown one”) are not just inseparable but “hardly distinguishable” from each other until the age of fifteen, when sexual competition destroys their twin-like relationship. The tale comes to a climax when Phillis, dressed in a rich brocade, triumphs over Brunetta at a local public ball in Barbados, but in the end she is outwitted by her enemy who, securing a remnant of the same fabric, appears at a later ball “attended by a beautiful Negro girl in a petticoat of the same brocade with which Phillis was attired.”⁸⁹ So successful is Brunetta’s ploy of turning Phillis into a figure of ridicule that her vanquished foe flees back to England. A similar unmasking of the “white” woman as black, involving an uncanny substitution of one for the other, can be seen in William Hogarth’s racist cartoon of the 1740s, *The Discovery*, in which a womanizer is tricked by his friends into making love to a black rather than a white woman.⁹⁰ The cartoon is accompanied by the text “Qui Color albus erat, nunc est contrarius albo” (“What was once white is now the opposite”), from Ovid’s tale of how the crow was changed from white to black as a punishment for gossiping. The crow of Ovid’s tale functions in Hogarth’s cartoon as a fable of woman’s essential and universal depravity.

If the West Indies had become a rich location for misogynistic views about degenerate and depraved women, then Schaw, who boasted that she had read everything written on this part of the world (*Journal*, 151), was doing her best to counter that tradition, setting up her own eminently sensible naturalness and brownness against *The Spectator*’s Brunetta and obliquely rebutting the allegations of her male contemporaries concerning white Creole women’s “impious act” of whitening. In many ways, in her concern to refute the predominantly negative image of the Creole white woman, Schaw resembles the middle-aged Arietta of *The Spectator*, precipitated into vindicating the honour of her sex. Incensed by a visitor’s gleeful recounting of the ancient and notorious story of the widow of Ephesus, Arietta retorts with a West Indian tale redolent of male inconstancy and betrayal, that of the Londoner Inkle who sells his pregnant Indian maid, Yarico, into slavery in Barbados. The “pleasing illusions” of this tale are all on Inkle’s side, with his “ringlets of fair hair loosely flowing on his shoulders” and “the dress, complexion, and shape of an European.”⁹¹ The dovetailing of Schaw’s pro-woman stance with Arietta’s feminist one is ironical, though, for the tale of Inkle and Yarico came to play a major part in antislavery discourse, a discourse that Schaw could only have viewed as ridiculously sentimental.

NOTES

I thank Judy Barbour and other members of the Department of English Research Seminar at the University of Sydney for comments on an earlier draft, and Markman Ellis and Brychan Carey for inviting me to speak on this topic at their 2001 "Discourses of Slavery and Abolition" conference at the University of London. I also thank Natalie Zacek for an historian's perspective, and Gillian Russell for last-minute advice. Finally, my thanks to Carol Willock for her generous research assistance throughout.

1. "His Ldship remarked that there had been no determination that they were free, the judgment (meaning the case of Somerset) went no further than to determine the Master had no right to compel the slave to go into a foreign country, &c" (original parenthesis). See Thomas Hutchinson, *The Diary and Letters of His Excellency Thomas Hutchinson*, ed. Peter Orlando Hutchinson (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington, 1883–6), 2:277. There have been many interpretations of Lord Mansfield's decision; see, for instance, William R. Cotter, "The Somerset Case and the Abolition of Slavery in England," *History* 79:255 (1994), 31–56; Jerome Nadelhaft, "The Somersett Case and Slavery: Myth, Reality, and Repercussions," *Journal of Negro History* 1 (1966): 193–208. For the wider context of the decision, see Teresa Michals, "'That Sole and Despotical Dominion': Slaves, Wives, and Game in Blackstone's *Commentaries*," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 27 (1993–4): 195–216.

2. See James Walvin, *Black Ivory: A History of British Slavery* (London: Fontana Press, 1993), 15.

3. A Planter [Edward Long], *Candid Reflections upon the Judgement lately awarded by the Court of the King's Bench, in Westminster-Hall, on what is commonly called the Negroe-cause* (London, T. Lowndes, 1772). The passage is very well known: "The lower class of women in England, are remarkably fond of the blacks, for reasons too brutal to mention . . . in the course of a few generations more, the English blood will become so contaminated with this mixture . . . this alloy may spread so extensively, as even to reach the middle, and then the higher orders of the people, till the whole nation resembles the Portuguese and Moriscos in complexion of skin and baseness of mind" (48–9).

4. Long, *Candid Reflections*, iii. "Washing the blackamoor white" was an ancient proverb expressing impossibility and fruitless labor. The expression was a commonplace of the Jacobean stage; see Karen Newman, "'And Wash the Ethiop White': Femininity and the Monstrous in *Othello*," in *Shakespeare Reproduced: The Text in History and Ideology*, eds. Jean E. Howard and Marion F. O'Connor (New York and London: Methuen, 1987), 142–62.

5. [Edward Long], *The History of Jamaica. Or, General Survey of the Antient and Modern State of that Island*, 3 vols. (London: T. Lowndes, 1774); references to this text will follow the sequence of volume number, followed by book, chapter, and page numbers. John Singleton, *A General Description of the West-Indian Islands* (1767), in Thomas W. Krise, ed., *Caribbeana: An Anthology of English Literature of the West Indies, 1657–1777* (Chicago and London: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1999), 262–314. Janet Schaw, *Journal of a Lady of Quality; being the Narrative of a Journey from Scotland to the West Indies, North Carolina, and Portugal, in the Years 1774 to 1776*, eds. E. W. Walker and C. M. Andrews (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1921). This work will subsequently be identified as "*Journal*" in the text.

6. For the colonial context of Long's writings, and the extent to which his extreme racism was somewhat atypical in the period, see Wheeler, *The Complexion of Race: Categories of Difference in Eighteenth-Century British Culture* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), 138–47. Recent commentators on Schaw include Elizabeth Bohls, *Women Travel Writers and the Language of Aesthetics, 1716–1818* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1995), 46–65; and Warren Montag, "The Universalization of Whiteness: Racism and Enlightenment," in *Whiteness: A Critical Reader*, ed. Mike Hill (New York and London: New York Univ. Press, 1997), 281–93.

7. Thomas DiPiero, "Missing Links: Whiteness and the Color of Reason in the Eighteenth Century," *The Eighteenth Century: Theory and Interpretation* 40:2 (1999), 155–74; this reference, 166. For the current explosion of interest in the field or matter of "whiteness," see David Roediger, *Towards the Abolition of Whiteness: Essays on Race, Politics, and Working Class History* (London: Routledge, 1994); Richard Dyer, *White* (London: Routledge, 1997); Hill, *Whiteness*; and more recently, in an Australian context, Ghassan Hage, *White Nation: Fantasies of White Supremacy in a Multicultural Society* (Sydney: Pluto Press, 1998).

8. Felicity Nussbaum, "Women and Race: 'A Difference of Complexion,'" in *Women and Literature in Britain, 1700–1800*, ed. Vivien Jones (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2000), 69–88.

9. *The Watchman* (1796), in *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. Lewis Patton (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970), 136.

10. For these pamphlets, see my "Conspicuous Consumption: White Abolitionism and English Women's Protest Writing in the 1790s," *ELH* 61 (1994), 341–62, and Charlotte Sussman, "Women and the Politics of Sugar, 1792," *Representations* 48 (1994): 48–69.

11. The term "'other' woman of empire" is taken from Felicity Nussbaum's *Torrid Zones: Maternity, Sexuality, and Empire in Eighteenth-Century English Narratives* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1995), 1.

12. See "Freed Blacks and Mulattos" in Long, *History of Jamaica*, II. 2. 13, 320ff.

13. For the planter who incestuously washed his progeny white over four generations before the age of 60, see *The Adventures of Jonathan Corncob, Loyal American Refugee. Written by Himself* (London, 1787), ed. N. Perrin (Boston: Godine, 1976), 72–3. The author was probably a Royal Navy officer. The sexual connotations of the proverb can also be seen in the comic opera, *The Black-a-moor Wash'd White* (1776), which caused a riot at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, when the white Christian hero was about to be cuckolded by a "Negar"; Gretchen Gerzina describes the play's tumultuous reception in her *Black England: Life before Emancipation* (1995; reprint, London: Allison and Busby, 1999), 15–16.

14. Long, *Candid Reflections*, iii–iv.

15. See Walvin, *Black Ivory*, 15; and Gerzina, *Black England*, 121.

16. *Nocturnal Revels: or, The History of King's Place, and other Modern Nunneries. Containing their Mysteries, Devotions, and Sacrifices. Comprising Also, The Ancient and Present State of Promiscuous Gallantry*, 2d ed. (London: M. Goadby, 1779), 1:220–4. For recent concern about West Indian blacks' use of dangerous steroid whiteners, see Serge F. Kovalski, "In Jamaica, Shades of an Identity Crisis," *Guardian Weekly*, 19–25 August 1999, 29; and Verene Shepherd, "Image, Representation, and the Project of Emancipation: History and Identity in the Commonwealth Caribbean," in *Contending with Destiny: The Caribbean in the 21st Century*, eds. Kenneth Hall and Denis Benn (Kingston, Jamaica: Ian Randle, 2000), 53–79.

17. James Grainger, *The Sugar Cane: A Poem* (1764), in Krise, *Caribbeana*, 242.

18. See Patrick Browne's *The Civil and Natural History of Jamaica* (London: Printed for the Author, 1756; reissued B. White and Son, 1789), 227.

19. In his speech counseling conciliation with the American rebels, Burke warned that the slaveholding colonists of Virginia and the Carolinas were "by far the most proud and jealous of their freedom. Freedom is to them not only an enjoyment, but a kind of rank and privilege. Not seeing there, that freedom, as in countries where it is a common blessing . . . may be united with much abject toil, with great misery, with all the exterior of servitude, Liberty looks amongst them like something that is more noble and liberal"; see *Edmund Burke, Pre-Revolutionary Writings*, ed. Ian Harris (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1993), 224.

20. For Edwards's deployment of Burke's arguments, see *The History, Civil and Commercial, of the British Colonies in the West Indies* (Dublin: Luke White, 1793), II. 4. 1, 9. References to this text will follow the sequence of volume number, book, chapter, and page numbers.

21. Baron de Humboldt, *Political Essay on the Kingdom of New Spain* (1811), translated by Mr Black, quoted in *The Monthly Review* 67 (January, 1812): 38. For the case of Cuba in the nineteenth century, see Verena Martinez-Alier, *Marriage, Class and Colour in Nineteenth-Century Cuba: A Study of Racial Attitudes and Sexual Values in a Slave Society* (London, 1974); reprint as Verena Stolcke (Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 1989).

22. The phrase "aristocracy of skin" was coined by T. B. Macaulay in a speech before the House of Commons in 1831; quoted in Robin Blackburn, *The Overthrow of Colonial Slavery, 1776–1848* (London: Verso, 1988; reprint, 1998), 448. For the consolidation of the idea of a white aristocracy in the earlier part of the eighteenth century, see Hilary Beckles, "White Women and Slavery in the Caribbean," *History Workshop Journal* 36 (1993): 69.

23. At the time of Schaw's visit to Antigua there were just under 2,600 whites and 37,500 blacks. For the demographics of Jamaica in the eighteenth century, where white numbers declined while the number of mulattos rose, see Mavis Christine Campbell, *The Dynamics of Change in a Slave Society: A Sociopolitical History of the Free Coloreds of Jamaica, 1800–1865* (London: Associated Univ. Presses, 1976), 44–45.

24. For a careful analysis of the extent to which the free "colored" group dissociated themselves from slaves in order to pursue identity with whites, see Arnold A. Sio, "Marginality and Free Coloured Identity in Caribbean Slave Society," in *Caribbean Slave Society and Economy: A Student Reader*, ed. Hilary Beckles and Verene Shepherd (New York: The New Press, 1991), 150–9; for a discussion of similar issues in Grenada and St. Kitts, see Edward L. Cox, *Free Coloreds in the Slave Societies of St. Kitts and Grenada, 1763–1833* (Knoxville: Univ. of Tennessee Press, 1984), 150 ff.

25. Long argued, "For my own part, I think there are extremely potent reasons for believing, that the White and the Negroe are two distinct species . . . none but the blind can doubt it" (*History of Jamaica*, II. 2. 13, 336). For a full account of the gradual rise of polygenesis, see Wheeler, *The Complexion of Race*.

26. Long, *History of Jamaica*, II. 2. 13, 274.

27. The *Oxford English Dictionary* entry for "creole" defines the West Indian use of the term as "a person born and naturalized in the country, but of European (usually Spanish or French) or of African Negro race: the name having no connotation of colour."

28. Peter Hulme, "Travel, Ethnography, Transculturation: St. Vincent in the 1790s," paper presented at the conference, "Contextualizing the Caribbean: New Approaches in an Era of Globalization," University of Miami, Coral Gables, Florida, September 2000; see <http://privatewww.essex.ac.uk/~phulme/>

29. By Long's definition, "real" Quinterons are those "who are above three steps removed in the lineal digression from the Negroe *venter* exclusive" (*History of Jamaica*, II. 2. 13, 332, 320–1).

30. Long, *History of Jamaica*, II. 2. 13, 329.

31. See *Letters to Jane from Jamaica, 1788–1796*, ed. Geraldine Nutt Mozley, (London: Published for the Institute of Jamaica by the West India Committee, [1938]), 18, 20. A century later, the preoccupations of West Indian parents had not changed. In order to enhance their daughters' chances in marriage, the elite sent them to England "to acquire that poise and complexion, that *cachet*" which would put them ahead of their competitors. Within a few months of return to the West Indies, however, the sallowness would return, necessitating "whitening" with French chalk and gin and the rouging of too pale cheeks. Only then could they compete at the Debutantes' Ball with the girls most recently returned from England; see Yselt Bridges's memoir of Trinidad, *Child of the Tropics: Victorian Memoirs* (London: Collins and Harvill Press, 1980), 160–1.

32. Edwards, *History, Civil and Commercial*, II. 4. 1, 11.

33. See Tassie Gwilliam, "Cosmetic Poetics: Coloring Faces in the Eighteenth Century," in *Body and Text in the Eighteenth Century*, eds. Veronica Kelly and Dorothea von Mücke (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford Univ. Press, 1994), 144–59.

34. In his *History of Jamaica*, Long referred to Browne as an "audacious slanderer" (II. 2. 13, 284).

35. Long, *History of Jamaica*, II. 2. 13, 279, 276–7.

36. I take the term "negroefied" from J. B. Moreton, *West India Customs and Manners* (London: J. Parsons, W. Richardson, H. Gardner, J. Walter, 1793), 105.

37. Krise, *Caribbeana*, 308–9.

38. Krise, *Caribbeana*, 309.

39. On the link between witchcraft and child-killing, see Jonathan Dalby, "Women and Infanticide in Nineteenth-Century Rural France," in *Engendering History: Caribbean Women in Historical Perspective*, eds. Verene Shepherd, Bridget Brereton, and Barbara Bailey (Kingston, Jamaica: Ian Randle, 1995), 337–68.

40. Browne, *Civil and Natural History of Jamaica*, 227.
41. Long, *History of Jamaica*, II. 3. 3, 436. For abortion and infanticide among slave women, see Barbara Bush, *Slave Women in Caribbean Society, 1650–1838* (Kingston, Jamaica: Heinemann, 1990), 137–42.
42. The use of dyes and astringents in fabricating hymens in the Middle Ages is discussed by Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, “Virginities Now and Then: A Respnose to Medieval Virginities,” in *Medieval Virginities*, eds. Sarah Salih, Anke Bernau and Ruth Evans (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, forthcoming); see also Kathleen Coyne Kelly, “Hymenologies,” in *Performing Virginity and Testing Chastity in the Middle Ages* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000).
43. Edward Ward, *A Trip to Jamaica* (1698); reprinted in Krise, *Caribbeana*, 89.
44. Alan Bewell, *Romanticism and Colonial Disease* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1999), 30; for Felicity Nussbaum’s *Torrid Zones*, see note 11 above.
45. Browne, *Civil and Natural History of Jamaica*, 227. “Happy, had they been so intent on the improvements of the mind, which they but too frequently neglect; while they bear so much pain, with a thorough resignation, to imitate our snakes and adders.” The passage is paraphrased in Long, *History of Jamaica*, II. 2. 13, 284.
46. Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, ed. Conor Cruise O’Brien (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969), 171. For woman as “an animal delighting in finery,” see Vicesimus Knox, *Winter Evenings: or Lucubrations on Life and Letters* (London: Charles Dilly, 1788), 3:254.
47. For details of Schaw and her well-connected family, see Editors’ Introduction, *Journal*, 9–12.
48. Burke to Charles O’Hara, quoted in *Edmund Burke, Pre-Revolutionary Writings*, 205.
49. Baron de Montesquieu, “Of Laws in Relation to the Nature of the Climate,” *The Spirit of the Laws*, Book 14, trans. Thomas Nugent (New York and London: Hafner, 1949), 221. Bryan Edwards was later to argue that the “hot and oppressive atmosphere” of the islands inflicted on the white women in particular “a lax fibre, and a complexion in which the lily predominates over the rose. To a stranger newly arrived, the ladies appear as just risen from the bed of sickness” (*History, Civil and Commercial*, II. 4. 1, 12).
50. “In cold countries they have very little sensibility for pleasure; in temperate countries, they have more; in warm countries, their sensibility is exquisite. . . . From this delicacy of organs peculiar to warm climates it follows that the soul is most sensibly moved by whatever relates to the union of the two sexes: here everything leads to this object” (Montesquieu, “Of Laws,” 223).
51. [William Pittis, attrib.], *The Jamaica Lady: or, the Life of Bavia. Containing an account of her intrigues . . . With the diverting humours of Capt. Fustian, etc* (London: Thomas Bickerton, 1720), 35–36.
52. Bryan Edwards wrote: “In their diet, the Creole women are, I think, abstemious, even to a fault. Simple water or lemonade, is the strongest beverage in which they indulge” (*History, Civil and Commercial*, II. 4. 1, 12).
53. The differences between Schaw’s positive evaluations of Creole life and those of other female-authored accounts of West Indian life can be clearly seen in Bridget Brereton, “Text, Testimony, and Gender: An Examination of Some Texts by Women on the English-Speaking Caribbean from the 1770s to the 1920s,” in Shepherd et al., *Engendering History*, 63–93.
54. Long, *History of Jamaica*, II. 2. 13, 285–6. Teresa Constantia Williams, who survived five husbands, was a notorious midcentury instance of this; see *The Gentleman’s Magazine* 36 (February 1766): 83–4.
55. See Adam Ferguson, *Essay on the History of Civil Society* (1767), quoted in Nussbaum, *Torrid Zones*, 8.
56. As will be clear in what follows, I disagree with Keith Sandiford’s claim that Schaw, in deploying an idealizing myth of Scottish national identity, presents the West Indian plantocracy as “inoculated from the moral and cultural mutations of Creole experience”; see Sandiford, *The Cultural Politics of Sugar: Caribbean Slavery and Narratives of Colonialism* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ.

Press, 2000), 100. Sandiford's overemphasis on Schaw's "ethnic particularism" as the sole explanation of her partisanship for the West Indian planters arises from his failure to place her experience of the islands within the larger context of the American Revolution.

57. Long, *History of Jamaica*, II. 3. 3, 413. Many other writers commented on the wearing of these masks. In 1790 an anonymous visitor remarked, "the ladies wore white and green hats, under which white handkerchiefs were pinned round their faces, meeting over their noses—this is the usual precaution for preventing the sun from blistering the skin. . . . At last the procession arrives before the piazza, all puffing for breath and half stifled with their handkerchiefs"; *A Short Journey in the West Indies*, 2 vols. (London, 1790), quoted in Edward Brathwaite, *The Development of Creole Society in Jamaica, 1770–1820* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 118.

58. "As to your humble Servant, I have always set my face to the weather; wherever I have been. I hope you have no quarrel at brown beauty" (*Journal*, 115).

59. It was estimated that in the mid-eighteenth century, "about one third of those of European birth [in Jamaica] were natives of Scotland"; see W. J. Gardner, *A History of Jamaica from its discovery . . . to the year 1872* (1873; reprint London: Cass, 1971), 164. Gardner also relates how, earlier in the century, Scots were kidnapped for service in the West Indies, then, on arrival, lined up "like negro slaves, for the planters to pick from" (170).

60. Shakespeare, *Much Ado About Nothing*, Act 2, Scene 1. There were even poems in praise of "brown beauty" as the desirable halfway point between "[t]hat whitely raw and unconcocted hiew" beloved of Northern nations, and "that adust aspect" prized by Moors and Indians. See Edward Herbert's poem, "The Brown Beauty," reprinted in Kim F. Hall, *Things of Darkness: Economies of Race and Gender in Early Modern England* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1995), 277–8.

61. The term "pet" for a black attendant was common in the eighteenth century. See David Dabydeen, *Hogarth's Blacks: Images of Blacks in Eighteenth Century English Art* (Mundelstrup, Denmark: Dangaroo Press, 1985), 21–30.

62. For a fascinating article on "real" as opposed to artificial whiteness in literature concerned with passing, see Harryette Mullen, "Optic White: Blackness and the Production of Whiteness," *Diacritics* 24 (1994): 71–89.

63. Moreton, *West India Customs and Manners*, 123. For some reflections on racial, as opposed to cultural, identity, see Walter Benn Michaels, "Critical Response II: The No-Drop Rule," in *Identities*, eds. Kwame Anthony Appiah and Henry Louis Gates, Jr. (Chicago and London: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1995), 401–12.

64. Beckles, "White Women and Slavery," 69. Martha Hodes mounts a similar case for the American South, as white servitude gave way to black slavery in the eighteenth century, in her *White Women, Black Men: Illicit Sex in the Nineteenth-Century South* (New Haven and London: Yale Univ. Press, 1997).

65. See Brereton, "Text, Testimony and Gender," in Shepherd et al., *Engendering History*, 63–93.

66. Similarly, Edwards boasted that their lives and manners were "sequestered, domestic, and unobtrusive" and that "no women on earth make better wives or better mothers" (*History, Civil and Commercial*, II. 4. 1, 13).

67. Long, *History of Jamaica*, II. 2. 13, 327–9. A yellow complexion commonly indicated Creoles of mixed-race origin. In *The Jamaica Lady*, the mustee Holmesia is introduced as follows: "She herself was a *Creole*, and consequently of a pale yellow Complexion" (8).

68. Long thought otherwise of the Jamaican white Creoles: "Scandal and gossiping are in vogue here as well as in other countries" (*History of Jamaica*, II. 2. 13, 283).

69. Thomas Atwood, *The History of the Island of Domenica, containing a Description of its Situation, Extent, Climate, Mountains, Rivers, natural Productions etc. etc.* (London: J. Johnson, 1791; new impression, London: Cass, 1971), 212. The metropolitan imagining of interracial sex encompassed by William Austin's racy cartoon of the Duchess of Queensberry fencing with her black servant Soubise, published 1773, was becoming inconceivable in the West Indian context; see Mary Dorothy George, *Catalogue of Political and Personal Satires . . . in the British Museum* (London: British Museum, 1935), 5:120 (cat. no. 5120).

70. According to Schaw, the revolutionaries had made a bad tactical error when they proclaimed that the King had promised “every Negro that would murder his Master and family that he should have his Master’s plantation.” The “Negroes,” believing the “Artifice” to be true, were ready to try the experiment, she wrote, adding bitterly, “and in that case friends and foes will be all one” (*Journal*, 199). The self-imposed restriction on private talk practiced by white West Indian women has collapsed into dangerously loose public speech in America.

71. For the early history of the town of Wilmington, see editors’ appendix, *Journal*, 282–5. For more about Wilmington in the early days of the Revolution, see Jeffrey J. Crow, “Slave Rebelliousness and Social Conflict in North Carolina, 1775 to 1802,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 37 (1980): 79–102.

72. Henry Home, Lord Kames, *Elements of Criticism*, 3 vols. (Edinburgh: A. Kincaid, 1762), 2:55.

73. In *Women Travel Writers*, 46–65, Elizabeth Bohls discusses the role of aesthetics in Schaw’s journal, but she narrows its role to a beautifying gloss on the horrors of slave society.

74. Thomas Hutchinson’s diary includes the following contemporary (1772) American account of a Customs House Officer: “[T]hey stripped him, tarred, feathered, and haltered him; carried him to the gallows, and whipped him with great barbarity in the presence of thousands” (*Diary and Letters*, 2:101).

75. *A New Method of Macarony Making, as practised at Boston in North America*, print published 12 October, 1774; see George, *Catalogue of Political and Personal Satires*, 5:168–9 (cat. no. 5232). For another cartoon depicting tarring and feathering, see *The Congress or the Necessary Politicians*, 5:204 (cat. no. 5297).

76. The OED entry under “tar-brush” cites Grose’s 1796 *Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue* thus: “Blue-skin . . . any one having a cross of the black breed, or, as it is termed, a lick of the tar brush.”

77. For Neilson’s “liberal, flowing, unrestrained Correspondence” with the patriot James Iredell, see *The Papers of James Iredell*, ed. Don Higginbotham (Raleigh, N.C.: Division of Archives and History, Department of Cultural Resources, 1976–), 1:248–326.

78. Howe’s shifting allegiance between patriots and loyalists is discussed by Philip Ranlet, “Loyalty in the Revolutionary War: General Robert Howe of North Carolina,” *The Historian* 53 (1991): 721–42.

79. Marcus Wood, *Blind Memory: Visual Representations of Slavery in England and America, 1780–1865* (Manchester: Manchester Univ. Press, 2000), and Mary Favret, “Flogging: The Anti-Slavery Movement Writes Pornography,” *Romanticism and Gender (Essays and Studies* 51), ed. A. Janowitz (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 1998), 20–43.

80. *The Notebooks of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. K. Coburn (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1957–1990), 2:2604 (June 1805).

81. *Celebrated Trials and Remarkable Cases of Criminal Jurisprudence* (London: Knight and Lacey, 1825), 5:434–44. For Wall’s trial and execution, see *The European Magazine* 41 (January and February 1802), 74–7, 154–7, and *The Gentleman’s Magazine* 72 (January 1802): 81, 180, 220. There is also an entry on Wall in the *Dictionary of National Biography* (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1967–8), 20:551–2.

82. Thomas Clarkson, *An Essay on the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species, particularly the African; translated from a Latin Dissertation* (London: J. Phillips, 1788), 136.

83. Clarkson, *An Essay*, 134. Clarkson here paraphrases John Mitchell, who had argued that “the primitive and original Complexion of Mankind, in *Noah* and his Sons” was “a dark swarthy, a Medium betwixt Black and White: from which primitive colour the *Europeans* degenerated as much on one hand, as the *Africans* did on the other.” See John Mitchell, “An Essay upon the Causes of the Different Colours of People in Different Climates,” *Philosophical Transactions (1683–1775)* 43.474 (1744–5): 102–50; this reference, 146.

84. Clarkson, *An Essay*, 140–5. For “progressive” proponents, like Clarkson, of the incidental or external causes of skin color, there were additional factors to be considered, such as cultural habits

and general "mode of living." While theories of the racial origins of Pacific islanders differed from those of "Negroes," we can identify some overlapping claims concerning the external causes of skin color. For instance, Johann Reinhold Forster, on Cook's second voyage (1772–5), claimed that the Tahitians were the fairest of all the South Sea islanders because they went "constantly dressed and covered" and practiced "frequent ablutions, encreasing by this simple elegance the fairness of their complexions, though they live within the tropics." The New Zealanders, on the other hand, though "living in the temperate zone . . . are more tawny, which may be in part ascribed to their uncleanness, abhorrence of bathing, and sitting exposed to smook and nastiness in their dirty cottages." See Johann Reinhold Forster, *Observations made during a Voyage round the World* (1778), eds. Nicholas Thomas, Harriet Guest, and Michael Dettelbach (Honolulu: Univ. of Hawai'i Press 1996), 176–7.

85. For an account of these experiments, see the essay "On the complexion of the natives of hot countries, and the varieties of the human race," appended to Beddoes's poem, *Alexander's Expedition down the Hydaspes and the Indus to the Indian Ocean* (Madeley, Shropshire: printed privately, 1792), 77–82.

86. See *The Golden Age, A Poetical Epistle from Erasmus D——n, M. D. to Thomas Beddoes, M. D.* (London: Rivington, 1794), 10. For the experiment behind this parody, see Beddoes's *A Letter to Dr Erasmus Darwin, on a new method of treating pulmonary consumption* (Bristol: Bulgin and Rosser, 1793), 50–55.

87. Beddoes's interest in the work of German philosophy and (racial) anatomy can be seen in his contributions to the *Monthly Review* in the mid 1790s, where he reviewed works by the anatomists Soemmerring, Blumenbach, and Camper. For Beddoes's life and works, see Dorothy A. Stansfield, *Thomas Beddoes M.D., 1760–1808, Chemist, Physician, Democrat* (Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1984).

88. Nussbaum, "Women and Race," 76–77.

89. Donald F. Bond, ed., *The Spectator* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), I (no. 80, June 1, 1711), 342–4.

90. "The Discovery" (c. 1743?) is reproduced in Ronald Paulson, *Hogarth's Graphic Works: First Complete Edition*, 2 vols. (New Haven and London: Yale Univ. Press, 1965), as Plate 173 in vol. 2. Also refer to cat. no. 161 in vol. 1. The print (British Museum, Satires no. 2600) was swiftly suppressed, and the plate destroyed.

91. *The Spectator* (no. 11, March 13, 1711), 47–51.