Notes

Introduction

1. It must be remembered, in this respect, that in November 2008, shortly before he was elected, Obama himself delivered his famous “A More Perfect Union” speech in which, rather than focus solely on his African American identity, he highlighted his mixed background once again (www.barackobama.com). See Boyd for an analysis of this speech as an example for Obama’s message of national unity “beyond” identity politics.

2. As it may be recalled, on July 30, 2009, Obama and Vice President Joe Biden invited Crowley and Gates to a private meeting at the White House, popularly known as the “Beer Summit,” to discuss the incident, especially the possible connections between racism and classism, as it was assumed that the caller’s suspicions had to do with the “unusualness” of a black man living in a (mostly white and upper-middle class) residential area.

3. These include, among others, the brutal sodomy of Haitian immigrant Abner Louima by a mob of Brooklyn police officers in 1997, or the infamous 1999 murder of Amadou Diallo, an African immigrant shot 19 times by 4 plainclothes New York officers who supposedly mistook the victim’s wallet for a gun (Wallace Constructing 5).

4. Interestingly, Morrison’s letter acknowledged her preference for Obama over his rival, Hillary Clinton, insisting, however, that her choice was based on their respective leadership capacities, not on race or gender issues. “I cared little for her [Hillary Clinton’s] gender as a source of my admiration, and the little I did care was based on the fact that no liberal woman has ever ruled in America. Only conservative or ‘new-centrist’ ones are allowed into that realm” (McGeveran).

5. It must also be acknowledged, in this respect, that Maya Angelou’s second autobiography, Gather Together in My Name (1974), had already set out to associate blackness with power rather than with biological notions of “race.”

6. See also Gilroy (Against).

7. Indeed, throughout the nineteenth and much of the twentieth centuries, African American people, as Chesnutt (38) reminds us,
could be classified as “black” or “mulatto” (as well as more “precise” categories like “quadroon” or “octoroon”) depending on their amount of “Negro blood.”

8. Paradoxically, however, by debasing and defining black people, whites, according to Baldwin, actually “debased and defined themselves” (“On Being White” 92).

9. Interestingly, Morrison herself has insisted that “real conversation” about race these days should be going on “among white people . . . Not with me.” For, as she says, “I can’t be the doctor and the patient” (Katchka).

10. As Fisher Fishkin (“Interrogating” 458) reminds us, one must acknowledge, however, the pioneering work of Werner Sollors (Beyond; Invention) in the 1980s on the constructed nature of “race.”

11. In this sense, it may be relevant to note here, as Valerie Babb reminds us, that cultural representations of whiteness are more popular (and often more subtle) than “scientific” studies of “race” and “racial difference,” thus having “an even greater reach within a culture” and an “even greater power to cement racial notions throughout a culture” (112–113).

12. As Fisher Fishkin (“Interrogating” 452) reminds us, one should not forget, for example, the multiplicity of specific African ethnic, linguistic, and religious traditions that shaped African American and American life.

13. It may be relevant to note here that Valerie Babb called the standard American literature survey course she taught at Georgetown University “White Male Authors,” which even caused her to be held up for ridicule by Time magazine. As Fisher Fishkin rightly notes, “Time’s behavior reflected the widely held assumptions that American culture is obviously white culture” (“Interrogating” 430). Given this episode, I would not be surprised if my redefinition of Melville and Hemingway as “African American” would spark a similar controversy, since “stating the obvious,” as Fisher Fishkin insists, is often considered “superfluous, irritating, and perverse” (430). However, I am still convinced of the necessity of running this risk.

14. The very term Black American may very well be, as Reid-Pharr (Black 14) insists, “shockingly redundant.”

15. “There seems to be a more or less tacit agreement among literary scholars,” Morrison insists, “that, because American literature has been clearly the preserve of white male views, genius, and power, those views, genius, and power are without a relationship to and removed from the overwhelming presence of black people in the United States” (Playing 5).
16. See also Murray (Blue 176–178) on the connections between Hemingway, improvisation, and the blues tradition.

17. Ellison insisted that literature did not have to be “about” Negroes to “give insight into our own predicament,” defining Faulkner, for example, as the equivalent of “certain civil rights figures in American writing—Rosa Parks and James Meredith, say—” (“Very” 754).

18. As he also argued elsewhere, “the object of my fiction imagination is American society and the American experience as experienced fundamentally by Negroes, and I find it impossible to deal with either in isolation, for they are intricately united in their diversity” (“Haverford” 434). Hence his criticism of 1960s African American intellectuals who advocated a specifically “black” culture and who, in his view, had lost “their mooring in tradition” (“Haverford” 435).

19. Interestingly, in this very same essay Ellison made what may, at least to some, now look like a prophetic statement, as he insisted that having a non-white as American President would be no guarantee of having more pro-black policies. “The demands of state policy are apt to be more influential than morality. I would like to see a qualified Negro as President of the United States, but I suspect that even if this were today possible, the necessities of the office would shape his actions far more than his racial identity” (“Some Questions” 300–301).

20. Actually, the bibliography on black men and masculinities in American literature is enormous and has just continued to grow since the 1980s, which makes it far too lengthy to list here. See, for example, Harper’s classic study on masculinism in African American culture and literature, or more recent texts by Blount, Leak, or Wallace, to name but a few. See Wallace (Constructing 2–4) for a historical review of studies on African American masculinities.

21. As Wallace reminds us, African American males have historically had to undergo “the self-alienating disjunction of race and manhood” (Constructing 5), manhood having been idealized by African (male) slaves, for example, as their only possibility of escaping from blackness and the category of “the inhuman.”

22. “At no point in the history of the New World,” as Wallace (Constructing 2) reminds us, “has race not constituted a defining feature of our national manhood. Who, after all, can deny the endless and unspeakable power of so many desperate white schemes as American slavery, Jim Crow, the lynch mob, urban dispossession, and, most recently, the prison industrial complex to unman (read: dehumanize) the African American male?”
23. As Nelson (239) reminds us, San Dominick is an archaic, anglicized spelling of the Spanish Santo Domingo (presently Dominican Republic), but it also evokes the French side of Hispaniola, Saint Domingue, thus alluding to the Haitian slave revolution for independence. Indeed, Melville, as Nelson (199) insists, changed the date of the actual event on which “Benito Cereno” is based from 1805 to 1799, the first year of the Haitian civil war.

24. Actually, no white masculinity, as the latest scholarship on the subject has shown, is stable and fixed. Masculine subjectivity, as David L. Eng has argued, is “the hybrid result of internalized ideals and lived material contradictions that were once external” (25). It follows, then, that all (white) masculine subjectivities are always failed identifications, despite trying to pass as coherent and static social identities. “Even the most orthodox of subject positions, finally, are ambivalent and porous” (Eng 26). See DiPiero; Robinson; Eng (25–26); Armengol (17–22).

25. Indeed, according to the Free Slaves Network (www.freetheslaves.net/page.aspx?pid=301), it is estimated that there are 21–30 million people in slavery today. This means that there are more people in slavery today than at any other time in history. While slavery has existed for thousands of years, this Network suggests that changes in the world’s economy and societies over the past 50 years have enabled a resurgence of slavery. After all, an average slave in the American South in 1850 cost the equivalent of US$40,000 in today’s money, whereas today a slave costs an average of US$90. In 1850, it was difficult to capture a slave and then transport them to the United States. Today, the Free Slaves Network concludes, millions of economically and socially vulnerable people around the world are potential slaves. No wonder, then, the current revived interest in slavery both in the United States and globally.

26. On America’s biracial heritage, see also Sollors (Neither).

1 Slavery in Black and White: White Masculinity as Enslaving in the Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass

1. See, for example, Yarborough (180–182), who contends that Douglass tried to justify black violence against whites by (unsuccessfully) linking it to the violence exerted by the founding fathers during the American War of Independence. See also Leak, who has argued that “as heroic as Douglass emerges after his battle with the slave-breaker Edward Covey—one in which he acts in self-defense—Douglass’s self-fashioned image emerges in relation to the myth of the violence-charged black male, a variation on the myth of black inferiority” (11).
2. As Yarborough notes, Douglass’s notion of “manhood” does indeed appear to “stand for the crucial spiritual commodity that one must maintain in the face of oppression in order to avoid losing a sense of self-worth” (167).

3. His narrative, in Bentley’s words, “does not deny an African identity, but he does claim white manhood” (212). For a similar view, see also Stephen Matterson, who has contrasted Douglass’s and Harriet Jacobs’s slave narratives as well as their respective gendered and racialized versions of “American identity.”

4. As Franchot puts it in more psychoanalytic terms, “To achieve ‘manhood’... is to forsake not only the mother but her race, whereas to achieve ‘blackness’ is to forsake the father and his virility” (142).

5. While most critics have focused on Douglass’s battle with Mr. Covey as integral to the revival of his sense of manhood, representing, to use Douglass’s words, “how a slave was made a man,” much less has been written on the whipping of Aunt Hester, in spite of Douglass’s insistence that this scene showed how somebody “was made a slave” (Narrative 60).

6. Indeed, most interpretations of that scene focus on the gendered ambiguities involved in Douglass’s response as an eyewitness. While some critics (Cunningham; Franchot; Douglass “In”) insist that Douglass, by virtue of his gender, sides with the white master and distances himself from his aunt, thus representing the slave’s “want of/for manhood” (Cunningham 140), others have insisted that he sympathizes with his aunt because of their shared racial oppression. Scholars such as Wallace (Constructing) or Van Leer have gone even further, suggesting that the scene actually activates Douglass’s fear of (sodomitic) rape, which was “as real during slavery as the heterosexual rape of women” (Wallace Constructing 88), and which, also according to Wallace, will encourage him to later resist and overpower Covey’s forceful attempts to submit (i.e., “feminize”) him. “If, in this scene, Douglass is, a slave made a man, then Covey... is a man made a slave/woman” (Wallace Constructing 94). While all these interpretations are, of course, open to questioning, what is important, I believe, is not only that both scenes are charged with sexual undertones but also, and above all, that they radically question the alleged invisibility and nonpresence of women and (hetero/homo)sexuality in the Narrative.

7. William Lloyd Garrison, for example, wrote a preface to Douglass’s Narrative. On the other hand, Douglass, as Robert K. Wallace (“Fugitive” 44) reminds us, became an agent of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society soon after his “discovery” by
Garrison at Nantucket in August 1841. Douglass was always willing to thank abolitionists for their support, as in his Narrative, for example, when he gives names of several New Bedford white people “who proved themselves quite worthy of the name of abolitionists” (88). He was especially eager, as Wallace (“Fugitive” 62) notes, to express his gratitude to those with whom he lived during his British travels in 1845–1847, when he had first been treated as a true equal.

8. While it is true that she is later reprimanded for this by her husband, who, as we shall see, obliges her to stop teaching Douglass, this does nothing but to further illustrate the subordination of both black and white women to the patriarchal order of slavery.

9. These words come from a New York Magazine interview to the Nobel Laureate Toni Morrison by Boris Kachka on occasion of the publication of her recent novel A Mercy (2008), which depicts slavery although “in a very early, seventeenth-century form.” In this novel, the white Northern farmer Jacob Vaark is portrayed as a compassionate man who shelters a collection of workers (a Native American, a black child, an orphan, and two indentured servants) who are “united by and against a culture of servitude that has little to do with skin color.” While Morrison insists that most civilizations (Greece, England, Russia, etc.) had unpaid labor, her novel thus illustrates how, in her words, “the exoticism came with race.”

10. In his 1876 “Oration in Memory of Abraham Lincoln,” delivered at the unveiling of the Freedmen’s Memorial Monument to Abraham Lincoln, Douglass did not hesitate to identify Lincoln as “preeminently the white man’s President,” insisting that “in his interests, in his associations, in his habits of thought, and in his prejudices,” he “was a white man.” Referring to the white audience as “the children of Abraham Lincoln,” he identified the black audience as “at best only his stepchildren, children by adoption, children by forces of circumstances and necessity” (312).

11. While Madison (twice) gains his freedom thanks to his white friend, Listwell himself is also shown to benefit from this interracial friendship, as he finally gains his spiritual freedom by giving up on his previous indifference to slavery and, in so doing, obtaining “a joy and gratification that knew no bounds” (“Heroic” 56). As Stauffer (139) rightly notes, Listwell’s very name suggests his capacity to “listen well” and, therefore, to perceive blacks as humans and equals. “From this hour,” Listwell proclaims, “I am an abolitionist. I have seen and Heard enough, and shall go home . . . resolved to atone for my past indifference to this ill-starred race, by making such exertions as I shall be able to do, for
the Speedy emancipation of every slave in the land” (“Heroic” 42).

12. As Carolyn L. Karcher (“White”) reminds us, it is important to bear in mind that Douglass’s views on black-white relations kept changing over the years, moving from a definition of brotherhood based on an intraracial bond between northern and southern whites to a cross-racial bond between white and black opponents of slavery. “Reconciliation between northern and southern whites was exactly what Douglass most dreaded, for,” as Karcher elaborates, “he knew it would mean once again sacrificing African Americans” (“White” 357). Thus, both during and after the war, he sought to prevent that reconciliation by demonizing southern slaveholders, accentuating “the fact rather than the cause of the slaveholder’s malevolence” (Karcher “White” 357).

13. “I hold that the slaveholder,” he claimed in an 1862 speech, “is just as good as his slave system will allow him to be. If I were a slaveholder, and was determined to remain such, I would equal the worst... I should hate the declaration of Independence, hate the Constitution... and every other form of freedom. Because in them all, I should see an enemy to my claim of property in man” (“War” 490). On Douglass’s views on slavery as an institutional rather than individual problem, see Castronovo and Nelson.

14. Douglass did indeed complain recurrently about the influence on colored people of religion, which, in his view, contributed to their submissive attitude to slavery. “I have met many religious colored people, at the south, who are under the delusion that God requires them to submit to slavery, and to wear their chains with meekness and humility,” he wrote in his revised biography. “I could entertain no such nonsense as this; and I almost lost my patience when I found any colored man weak enough to believe such stuff” (My Bondage 101). While complaining about black submissiveness, he was also aware of “race traitors.” Upon his arrival in New Bedford after escaping from the South, for example, he feared betrayal on the part of other blacks, seeing “in almost every colored man cause for distrust” (Narrative 86).

15. The wickedness of white slaveholders proves to be such that they even allow blacks to drink as much as they can during the Christmas holidays simply to “disgust” slaves with the “abuse of freedom,” making them mistake “vicious dissipation” for “liberty” and, eventually, making them feel that it is just as good to be “slaves to man as to rum” (Narrative 65–66).

16. Despite the variety of slaveholders that pervade both the plantation and his city life, however, Douglass’s arrival in Baltimore allows him to appreciate a recurrent distinction between a country and a city
slave, who is defined as “almost a freeman, compared with a slave on the plantation” (Narrative 35). Indeed, a city slave is described as being, in general, better treated, especially much better fed and clothed, than his rural counterpart, which is, once again, put down to critical distinctions among white slaveholders. Terrified of the reputation of being a cruel master, a city slaveholder will do whatever it takes, in Douglass’s opinion, to avoid it, making sure not to “shock the humanity of his non-slaveholding neighbors with the cries of his lacerated slave” (Narrative 35). Although Mrs. Hamilton is described as an exception to the rule, lashing and almost starving her slaves to death, few city slaveholders want to “incur the odium” connected to the reputation of being a cruel master. As a result, most are “anxious,” as Douglass (Narrative 35) himself concludes, “to have it known” that their slaves are fed properly.

17. Little wonder, then, that Douglass often emphasized the slaveholders’ “uneasiness,” suggesting that “down in the heart of every one of them God has planted an abolitionist lecturer” (“Farewell” 2:31). In Douglass’s view the slaveholders’ satisfaction would eventually turn into anxiety and terror since, they would sooner or later realize that there was “intellect burning—a spark of divinity enkindled—within the bosoms of the men he oppresses” (“Encroachments” 3:102).

18. On Douglass’s belief in the slaveholder’s capacity for reform, see also Gleason.

19. Indeed, the whipping of Aunt Hester in the very first chapter of the Narrative resulting from her jealous master, is defined by Douglass himself, as we have seen, as “the hell of slavery” (12).

20. Rather than discourage Douglass, however, Mr. Auld’s stress on the detrimental effects of education on slaves actually encourages his slave to pursue it even further, the white master’s admonition helping, ironically enough, to show the black man “the pathway from slavery to freedom” (Narrative 34).

21. As Grant tells his southern friends, “I confess, gentlemen, I felt myself in the presence of a superior man; one who, had he been a white man, I would have followed willingly and gladly in any honorable enterprise. Our difference of color was the only ground for difference of action. It was not that his principles were wrong in the abstract; for they are the principles of 1776. But I could not bring myself to recognize their application to one whom I deemed my inferior” (“Heroic” 76–77).

22. Indeed, Douglass found leaving Baltimore especially “painful” because, as he himself acknowledges, of having to separate from “those little Baltimore boys” to whom he felt “the strongest attachment” (Narrative 46).
23. The very concept of whiteness does indeed seem to be both culture specific and context bound. According to Winthrop Jordan, the term *white* began to be commonly used to describe human beings in the American colonies toward the end of the seventeenth century, when there seems to have been something of a shift in the terminology that Englishmen in the colonies applied to themselves. From the initially most common term *Christian*, at mid-century there was a marked drift toward *English* and *free*. It was only after about 1680 when, taking the colonies as a whole, the term *white* began to be used (Jordan 95). On the birth of whiteness in American culture, see also Babb (7–88).

24. Of course, class was not the only factor that played a role in the construction of whiteness as an ethnic identity. Rather, class interests intersected with other discourses, especially the growing racist theories to justify the imperialistic expansion and “manifest destiny” of white Anglo-American culture in the nineteenth century. See Babb (38–41) in this respect.

25. Moreover, the invention of “whiteness” served to prevent a rebellion from the European-American bond-laborers. The fear of white servants and Negroes uniting in rebellion, a prospect that made some sense in the 1660s and 1670s, disappeared completely during the next half-century. It is no less significant that the only rebellions of white servants in the continental colonies came before the official institution of slavery (Allen 2: 252). After 1700, with the invention of the “white race,” every white man, no matter his economic status, could at least find pride in his race. Moreover, the immediate control of the black workers fell almost entirely into the hands of lower-class white males. On the invention of “whiteness” to minimize class warfare in nineteenth-century America, see also Saxton; Lott.

26. For example, the 1750 act repealing the ban on slavery in Georgia included a “deficiency” provision requiring the employment of one “white man Servant” on each plantation for every four Negroes employed. As Allen (2: 253) insists, it also forbade the employment of Negroes except in cultivation and cooping.

27. It required a “degree of courage unknown” to white men, Douglass explains, to do so. For, at the time, “the slightest manifestation of humanity toward a colored person,” as Douglass insists, “was denounced as abolitionism, and that name subjected its bearer to frightful liabilities” (*Narrative* 79).

28. Douglass, however, seems to mistrust their sympathy when they insist that he “should be free” and actually encourage him to escape. “I pretended not to be interested in what they said... for I feared that they might be treacherous. White men have been
known to encourage slaves to escape, and then, to get the reward, catch them and return them to their masters” (*Narrative* 40–41).

29. Allen (2 vols.) and Feagin provide a detailed account of the social and historical reasons for the re-classification as “white” of the Irish, who had been discriminated against both for their Catholic affiliation and their allegedly racial inferiority. Allen (46) thus insists on the parallels between Irish oppression and that of African Americans, noting, for example, how “if from the beginning of the 18th century in Anglo-America the term ‘negro’ meant slave, except when explicitly modified by the word ‘free,’ so under English law the term ‘hibernicus,’ Latin for ‘Irishman,’ was the legal term for ‘unfree.’” Like the Irish, Greek, and Italian immigrants in the United States at the beginning of the twentieth century were not usually regarded as white, either. Barrett and Roediger describe organized labor activity as one of the reasons why previously “nonwhite” groups became white. They contend that Greeks and Italians participated in an important strike of the Western Federation of Miners in 1912, and the category of white worker expanded after that event (404). See also Cappello on the redefinition of Italian Americans as white.

30. In his nonfiction work *The Claims of the Negro, Ethnologically Considered* (1854), published one year after “The Heroic Slave,” Douglass does indeed establish a direct correlation between plantation slaves and the Irish peasants he encountered on a trip to Europe:

> I say, with no wish to wound the feelings of any Irishman, that these people lacked only a black skin and woolly hair, to complete their likeness to the plantation negro. The open, uneducated mouth—the long, gaunt arm—the badly formed foot and ankle—the shuffling gait—the retreating forehead and vacant expression—and, their petty quarrels and fights—all reminded me of the plantation, and my own cruelly abused people . . . the Irishman educated, is a model gentleman; the Irishman ignorant and degraded, compares in form and feature, with the negro! (30)

When Richard Yarborough, commenting on this passage, suggests that it reveals Douglass’s “tendency to link physical appearance with mental capacity” (173), I think he misses Douglass’s emphasis on education as the determining factor in Douglass’s comparison, mistaking cause for effect. Indeed, Frederick insists on the (lack of) education of both the Irish peasants and the plantation slave as the *cause*, not the effect, of their physical appearance
and bad manners, thus underlining the moral obligation to spread education to both the common Irishman and his “own cruelly abused people.”

31. The feminization of black males by white men is well-documented. In the nineteenth century, anti-abolition writers, for instance, often stressed the absence of African men’s beards. In *Six Species of Men* (1866), by an anonymous author, one reads, for example, that “another peculiarity of the negro is absence of beard. The Caucasian is really the only bearded race, and this is the most striking mark of its supremacy over all others” (qtd. in DiPiero 121). Another example for the inextricable connection between manhood and the white race is provided by castration, especially in the form of lynching, which was reserved almost exclusively as a punishment for African men, and was restricted nearly always to serious sexual offenses. As is known, castration and lynching involved the (literal) erasure of the phallus of black men, thus symbolizing their feminization and, by implication, the reinforcement of the traditional association between masculinity and whiteness. On the recurrent feminization of black men by their white counterparts, see DiPiero (121); Harris (*Exorcising*); and Wiegman.

32. See Ernest (32) for an application of Hartman’s thesis to Douglass’s representation of the African-American “community.”

33. Such narratives, according to Babb (82), do actually depict white identity as “noncarnal” and “morally superior in implicit comparison to black” and, in so doing, reveal nothing but the fear of losing white privilege through miscegenation.

34. In this respect, Ryan (94), for instance, has cited as an example Douglass’s *My Bondage and My Freedom*, especially for “its attention to the racial injustices of the antebellum North.”

35. Barnes (249) does indeed cite Douglass’s battle with Mr. Covey, after which Douglass himself claims that he was a “freeman in *fact*, while [he] remained a slave in *form*,” as evidence of the “all-important spirit of manhood that results from the refusal to be treated as a slave.” See also Acampora, who has applied Nietzsche’s philosophy to Douglass’s “aisthesis” of freedom. More specifically, she suggests that, after his brawl with Covey, Frederick is empowered by “the feeling of his freedom,” which in turn provides him with “a conception of agency requisite for realizing meaningful freedom” (181, 187).

36. It is true, though, that, despite the striking similarities between the two forms of enslavement, the provisional status of indentured servants was in stark contrast to the permanence of black
servitude. See Babb (24–31) for a deeper analysis of (white) human bondage in colonial America.

37. I am consciously borrowing here the words from the title of William Sollors’s book on America’s biracialism.

2 Of Gray Vapors and Creeping Clouds: White (Male) Privilege as Blinding in Herman Melville’s “Benito Cereno”

1. It is true that some of his major texts lack actual female characters. In Moby-Dick, for example, no woman sails aboard the Pequod, and only a few women are mentioned in the novel at all. Nevertheless, when examined closely, the novel contains numerous (symbolic) representations of “the feminine,” including maternal whale images, the names of the ships, or even the sea itself, which Melville scholars like Joyce Adler have directly associated with women’s sexuality and the maternal waters. Whether real or essentialized, woman (or at least Woman) may thus be said to play a fundamental part in the imagery of the novel, representing, in Adler’s view, “peace, community, and the original latent good in the heart of man” (60–61).

2. See, for example, Serlin.

3. Indeed, his works, as Freibert (9) reminds us, show a (three-stage) progression, moving from a youthful sympathy for the poor woman in Redburn to an understanding of the oppression of women of different economic levels in Pierre and a close identification with woman as individual and as artist in the later works.

4. As Sedgwick puts it, “every impulse of every person in this book that could at all be called desire could be called homosexual desire, being directed by men exclusively toward men” (92).

5. Ann Douglas, for example, notes that the “book was written for men, or at least from a self-consciously masculine viewpoint,” portraying women and domesticity as “what is forgotten,” just as Nancy Fredricks asserts that the novel exemplifies “a bastion of masculinist aesthetics,” representing the “segregation of the sexes in nineteenth-century America” (41).

6. See, for example, Person (“Melville’s” 21).

7. In the midst of the storm episode (Chapter 119), with Ahab in his most terrifying state among the glowing corposants, the seaman does indeed acknowledge his “queenly personality,” which, as Marovitz (6) reminds us, “expresses a remarkable and altogether unexpected truth about himself.”

8. Just before the three-day chase of Moby Dick, Ahab confides to Starbuck that he sees his own wife and child in Starbuck’s eye. Ahab, as Person notes, plays the bachelor Adam in this scene, the
man who has abandoned his wife and child, while Starbuck is the married or mated Adam, the man whose gaze is a “magic glass” in which Ahab can see his own wife and child. In Person’s own words, Ahab’s envious gaze is thus “circumflex, for it returns to him and reveals a distorted male self” (“Melville’s” 12).

9. See also Glazier; Long. The former critic convincingly argues how Ahab’s wound, symbolized by his ivory leg (a substitute phallus), signalizes his vulnerability as well as his defeat before the superior whale and, therefore, his feminization. In Glazier’s words, “Ahab’s wound decreases his manhood... Emasculated, he is victimized as he feared” (141–142). Similarly, Long (43, 48) suggests that Ahab’s quest is to eliminate the force that has reduced his manhood by concentrating and projecting his hatred and male power onto the White Whale. However, because Ahab’s quest is a failed one, Melville seems to offer a harsh critique of his protagonist’s compulsively phallic masculinity, ultimately equating Ahab’s defeat with the defeat of male aggression.

10. As Ishmael himself explains, “he [Queequeg] pressed his forehead against mine, clasped me around the waist, and said that henceforth we were married; meaning, in his country’s phrase, that we were bosom friends” (Melville Moby 50). After marrying each other, Ishmael and his friend, like any other loving couple, embark on a honeymoon, during which they share secrets in bed. In Ishmael’s words:

   How it is I know not; but there is no place like bed for confidential disclosures between friends. Man and wife, they say, there open the very bottom of their souls to each other; and some old couples often lie and chat over old times till nearly morning. Thus, then, in our hearts’s honeymoon, lay I and Queequeg—a cosy, loving pair. (Moby 51)

11. Melville’s texts would thus seem to be peopled with tender-hearted and sensitive boys, whose physical attributes, as Marovitz (6) has concluded, also suggest a feminine or “at least androgynous appearance.”

12. While this could certainly be related to the popularity of the sentimental novel in nineteenth-century America, such an ambivalent portrait of masculinity has also been recurrently linked to Melville’s biography. See, for example, Charles J. Haberstroh’s study on Melville and male identity, wherein he explores Melville’s constant tensions as a (male) writer between his “hopeless and introverted sense of himself as a lost boy” and his “desire to fulfill the extroverted traditions of male status, success, and assertiveness with which he grew up” (29).
13. As Eric Lott notes, “Melville was nearly the only elite cultural figure to recognize the centrality of racial conflict to whatever national culture might be on the horizon” (90).

14. Thus, for example, Eric J. Sundquist has traced the antislavery legacy of Melville in the civil rights movements of the 1960s, illustrating the influence on Robert Lowell of “Benito Cereno,” which, like Lowell’s dramatic rewriting of Melville’s story, not only denounced racial injustice but predicted the imminence of violence and social revolt. Gleason, on the other hand, has also explored the connections between Frederick Douglass and Herman Melville, showing the influence of Douglass’s “volcano” speech on the “slumbering volcano” depicted by Melville in “Benito Cereno.”

15. Actually, the relevance to racial politics of Melville’s work was long ignored by black and white scholars alike, which may be attributed to several reasons. On the one hand, Melville, whose journey to Polynesia had begun his creative life, focused on travel writing, particularly adventurism in faraway lands. This differed radically from most nineteenth-century (black) fiction, from William Wells Brown’s Clotel (1853) to Frances Harper’s Iola Leroy (1892), which, as Rampersad (161) argues, usually concentrated on the (middle-class) experience of domesticity, marriage, and sentimentality. On the other hand, Melville seemed to merge something like adventurism or bohemianism with disturbingly progressive ideas about race, which proved unsettling to black and white writers alike. In Rampersad’s words, “these ideas intimidated the black writer almost as much as they have challenged the white world, which recoiled from them in the 1850s and has only slowly come around to engaging them fully” (161).

16. Similarly to gender, then, Melville’s representations of race seem to have been harshly criticized as well. Indeed, critics like Juniper Ellis, for instance, have established an explicit connection between Melville’s racial and sexual politics, linking the alleged conservatism of the former to that of the latter. Even though novels such as Typee (1846) or Omoo (1846) and Mardi (1849) have been recurrently described as part of Melville’s postcolonial project, representing a damning critique against colonialist and missionary enterprises in the Pacific, Ellis contends that the female characters in these novels are traditional and stereotypical, idealized in racialized, usually eroticized “Polynesian” terms. While focusing on his celebration of “non-normative” masculinity and male-male friendships, queer studies, in Ellis’s view, have also tended to diminish the role played by women in his works. Thus, she concludes that studies of both imperialism and
nonnormative sexualities in his work are distorted unless a clear recognition is made of his “recurring and prescriptive roles for women” (Ellis 64–65).

17. See Rogin (107); Babb (113–116) has argued that Ishmael’s “marriage” to Queequeg, a same-sex person of another race, “deconstructs rather than constructs whiteness,” questioning both the heterosexual norm of white identity and the racial purity represented through the ideal of white femininity.

18. These examples are mentioned in Wallace (“Fugitive” 59).

19. While seemingly a sea tale about the barbarous practices of the navy, Redburn also establishes an analogy between slavery and shipboard authority. In this story, the strict naval code is shown to reproduce the barbarous system of slavery, with the “sea-lords” as new plantation owners and the whip, the emblem of chattel slavery, as a symbol of shipboard authority itself. Redburn himself insists that there is more whipping on an American ship than on a Southern plantation, complaining that he is “commanded like a slave . . . vulgar and brutal men lording it over me, as if I were an African in Alabama” (202). See Tamarkin; Barnes.

20. See also Ernest.

21. See Jay, who reminds us that, when the novella opens, Billy’s beauty is compared to that of a “Handsome Sailor” who, significantly enough, is “so intensely black that he must needs have been a native African of the unadulterated blood of Ham” (Melville Billy 102). While later descriptions of Budd emphasize his whiteness, the opening figure of the African sailor thus relates Billy to blackness from the start, which also helps reassert, as Jay has concluded, Melville’s recurrent connections between racism and oppression at sea, the imprisonment of sailors and the enslavement of Africans, as well as mutiny and slave revolt. See also Sedgwick’s classic study on male beauty and homoeroticism in this story, both of which Jay rereads as clearly racialized.

22. While Morrison was among the first (contemporary) scholars in exploring Melville’s (de)construction of whiteness, one must acknowledge her own debt to D. H. Lawrence, who had already challenged the negligence of Moby-Dick’s critics in the 1930s regarding race, identifying the White Whale as “the deepest blood-being of the white race; he is our deepest blood-nature” (160). See also Joe Kovel’s pioneering study on the whiteness of the whale from a psychoanalytic perspective (231–247). Questioning the assumption of white supremacy, which condemned him to both critical and commercial failure in his own time, Melville, according to Kovel, depicts Ahab as the epitome of the white man terrified of his own whiteness (i.e., blankness and nothingness), which he then
projects onto the leviathan. In Kovel’s words, “the ‘wretched infidel,’ who is Ahab—and the Ahab in all of us—projects the blankness of his own whiteness upon the whale and seeks to forestall his own annihilation through annihilating the world” (240). More recently, Valerie Babb has elaborated on the same view, suggesting that *Moby-Dick* is far more than a tale of a crazed monomaniac’s quest to conquer a white whale reflecting all his frustrations; “it is also a cautionary tale of the dangers posed to American democracy by blindly pursuing an ideology of whiteness that seeks to make one group the masters of others” (117).

23. Elizabeth Schultz also sees the whale hunt in *Moby-Dick* as metaphorical, a symbol of Ahab’s struggle against the alienating power of whiteness. Deconstructing the assumption of whiteness’s superior virtue, Melville depicts the white whale as faceless and devoid of “either sensation or instinct” and, in so doing, redefines whiteness as inhuman, heartless, and ultimately incomprehensible. Indeed, Ahab has been permanently scarred—mutilated and demeaned, physically and psychologically—by the power of whiteness (Schultz 649).

24. As Rogin reminds us, “mutiny or desertion is central to the action of *Typee*, *Omoo*, *Mardi*, *White-Jacket*, *Benito Cereno*, and *Billy Budd*—every other tale of the sea but *Redburn*. Mutiny takes place offstage in *Moby-Dick*, on the *Town-Ho*” (128–129). Indeed, Melville himself, as Rogin (80) has explained, seemed to have firsthand experience of this type of activity as he was imprisoned in Tahiti in the fall of 1842 for participating in a mutiny on the *Lucy Ann*, which he fictionalized in *Omoo* (1847). Owing to the fact he ended up escaping from prison, Melville himself has been defined as “a double fugitive” (Wallace “Fugitive” 56).

25. Most critics agree that “Benito Cereno” was inspired on by the eighteenth chapter of Amasa Delano’s *A Narrative of Voyages and Travels in the Northern and Southern Hemispheres* (1817), which includes records of a slave revolt on *The Tryal*, a Spanish ship.

26. As Rogin (209) insists, “there is a near-mutiny on the *Neversink*, comic mutiny on the *Julia*, failed mutiny on the *Town-Ho*, alleged mutiny on the *Bellipotent*, and desertion from the *Molly*. The metaphoric slaves on all those ships fail to overthrow their masters. Only the real *San Dominick* slaves succeed” (209).

27. Sale (147) reminds us that, prior to the 1950s, the story was simply interpreted as a struggle between good and evil and that it was only in the wake of the civil rights movement that Babo, once associated with evil, came to be seen as a fighter of a nationalist movement, with Delano being transformed from a sympathetic
victim into a slaveholder “getting his just desserts.” See also Karcher (*Shadow* ix).

28. Such feelings of discomfort are increased throughout the narrative not only by the unreliability of Delano’s voice but also by the story’s own narrative structure, especially Benito Cereno’s final deposition. After all, the deposition, though laying a claim to objectivity as a legal document, cannot be taken at face value since many of its details, as Melville himself writes, are only “irregularly given” (“Benito” 206). See Sale (154) in this respect, who argues that the very structure of Melville’s story generates an unsure sense of reality by purposefully suspending sure knowledge of the *San Dominick’s* history. In so doing, the story makes its readers anxious, “not only about the outcome of the story, but about the reliability of the characters, and ultimately, about their/our own perceptions” (Sale 154).

29. In an insightful study on the politics of “plausibility” in Shakespeare’s *Othello*, Alan Sinfield has actually shown how Iago’s stories in this play are believable because they rely on what Sinfield terms “the conditions of plausibility,” particularly the racist assumptions of the time. According to this critic, Iago is convincing not because he is extraordinarily ingenious or evil, but simply because he is the voice of “common sense,” the continued repletion of the already “known,” the culturally “given.” By drawing on culturally hegemonic narratives of blacks as inferior and uncivilized, Iago manages to convince the Venetian Republic of Othello’s racial “difference” as a Turk and, as a result, of his savagery and barbarism. The strength of ideology, then, comes from the way it gets to be “common sense.” Certain interpretations of reality strike us as more “plausible” than others because they are in line with “what we have experienced already, and are confirmed by others around us” (Sinfield 31, 32). They work, as Sinfield (51) himself concludes, because they are “plausible” as they “activate regressive aspects of our cultural formation.”

30. Hence Peggy McIntosh’s much-cited definition of white privilege as an “invisible package of unearned assets” on which white people can rely, but about which they were meant to remain “oblivious.” Besides “unearned assets” (things which everyone should have in a just society but are in fact awarded to the dominant race only), such an “invisible weightless knapsack,” as McIntosh (291) insists, also includes “unearned power” (those things that are damaging in human terms even if they bring advantage and are associated with dominance, such as the freedom not to be concerned about the needs or reality of others). It must be noted, however, that
McIntosh insists that while whites are in some ways privileged, they are in other ways profoundly damaged and retarded by this system of “unearned dominance” (291). Delano’s blindness to the reality of slavery may be considered, as we shall see, an example of this.

31. Of this, Mahoney writes, “whiteness is visible to whites...when it appears to be the basis on which well-being is threatened” and when, “through interventions in the norm of transparency,” they are “forced to experience the consciousness of whiteness” (“Social” 331).

32. Clearly, Melville’s story, as Nelson (203) herself insists, reveals the fragility of this “national” fraternity of white men, symptomaticizing “the profound abbreviation of human identification that structures white brotherhood.” Indeed, Delano’s (mis)identification of Don Benito as his equal entails an “imaginative and emotional short-circuiting” (Nelson 203) that prevents him from understanding the real situation on the San Dominick.

33. See also Horsman, who traces the making of early (white) Americans to their self-definition as the true inheritors of the Anglo-Saxon lineage, replaced by what they saw as the “tragic” coming to England of feudal hierarchy.

34. Interestingly, Delano also uses a similar “Other-ing” strategy when dealing with the Spaniards, whom he also defines as “an odd set” (166), insisting, for example, that their mode of shaving is “a Little different from what it is with other nations” (172). Clearly, then, Delano’s inability to understand the situation on board the Spanish ship leads him to simply attribute it to a matter of racial/cultural difference, marking both blacks and Spaniards as “Other.” In this respect, it may also be interesting to note that Roediger (Wages and Towards) argues that to be white in antebellum America meant to be “not-black” but also nonenslaved, which also entailed both not being a plantation slave and not living in a monarchy, but rather in a republic. In this sense, then, Delano, as a Republican, probably feels superior to Cereno, too, the latter being subjected to the Spanish King.

35. “Might not the San Dominick, like a slumbering volcano, suddenly let loose energies now hid?” (155), Delano wonders. Wallace (Douglass 110–111) has convincingly argued that the slumbering metaphor used here by Melville is borrowed from Frederick Douglass’s 1849 “Slumbering Volcano” speech, both authors seeing eye to eye regarding the justness of insurrection and the blindness of slaveholders and slavery’s sympathizers to the fire below.
36. “Against the ideology that saw slavery as the most organic of social relations,” as Rogin (216) argues, “Melville conventionalized, as stage props, the symbols of authority which slaveowners insisted were theirs by nature.”

37. Harriet Beecher Stowe is the obvious example here, although there are other male abolitionists and pro-feminists of the period too, like the famous abolitionist James Mott, husband to Lucretia Mott, both an abolitionist and women’s rights activist.

38. Hence the recent claims of women writers such as Kathy Acker and, perhaps most famously, Hélène Cixous, both of whom have stressed the continued interlocking connections between white racism and patriarchal oppression. If Acker appears to see all the powerless as somehow “feminized,” with one of her characters concluding that “most humans are now women” (109), Cixous also ends up defining her own sex, long silenced and culturally repressed, as “black.” In her words:

We the precocious, we the repressed of culture, our lovely mouths gagged with pollen, our wind knocked out of us, we the labyrinths, the ladders, the trampled spaces, the bevies—we are black and we are beautiful. (318)

See also the parallels drawn by Peggy McIntosh between the (self-)denial of white privilege and male privilege. As she argues, “I think whites are carefully taught not to recognize white privilege, as males are taught not to recognize male privilege” (291).

39. While black men were particularly attracted to the fight for Independence because their gender enabled them to imagine themselves a citizens of the emergent Republic, the collateral existence of chattel slavery simply encouraged white male colonists to resist more forcefully what they saw as British attempts to “enslave” them, rather than to sympathize with black slaves (Sale 14).

40. If the first appearance of Sambo, a “comic Negro” stereotype, occurred in a play called The Divorce (1781), blackface minstrelsy gained popularity in the 1830s and 1840s, thanks to the Jim Crow shows created by Thomas D. Rice, where whites in blackface created and spread stereotypes of African Americans as happily submissive child-like slaves (Delgado and Stefancic 171). See also Lott.

41. The stereotype of black manhood as hypermasculine will become especially apparent after the Civil War, when the image of the black male as a brutal rapist was used to justify the widespread lynching by the Ku Klux Klan that took 2,500 lives between 1885 and 1900 only.
42. Fredrickson notes, in this respect, that whenever the fear of emancipation increased, the savage side of the dual black image did usually reappear “with dramatic suddenness” (44).

43. Actually Delano’s dualistic vision of blacks had already become apparent earlier in the novel, when he described a group of black women nursing their children as “loving doves” who, in the event of a threat to their children, can suddenly turn into “unsophisticated leopardesses” (160). Conflating gender and racial stereotypes, this vision of “naked nature” seems here to support the racist thinking that depicts dark-skinned people as heathen, uncivilized, and closer to nature, at the same time as it evinces, as Sale (157) rightly points out, his bestial characterization of the women into a “dualistic form” as either dangerous or nurturing. From the white (male) perspective, women of color have often been depicted, paradoxically enough, as beautiful yet “dark” and uncivilized, sexually promiscuous but usable for breeding and childcare, unfeminine yet over-fertile. “Woman of Color as trope,” as Frankenberg (12) has noted, “is construed ambivalently, always on a slippery slope from exotic beauty to unfemininity and ugliness” (12).

44. Rampersad (168–169) has provocatively compared the death-dealing shadow of blacks on whites to the effect of Du Bois’s veil on blacks. However, while the veil has a negative effect on blacks, the shadow, according to this scholar, may have a more positive effect by representing victory over whites and destabilizing unitary consciousness as well as political and cultural power.

45. While Du Bois sees the veil as negative mostly for blacks, who are thus provided with the irreconcilable disjunction or “double-consciousness” (7) of being American and black, I would like to argue that this separation has a negative effect on whites themselves, too, particularly regarding their ignorance about blacks, as Melville’s story illustrates.

46. See Sundquist for an excellent analysis of the influence of Melville on Robert Lowell’s Don Benito, a play based on the novel of the same name.
to serious critical scrutiny. Papa has been further demythologized since the May 1986 publication of his unfinished *The Garden of Eden*, revealed the writer’s (occult) fascination with androgyny and gender-crossing. This posthumous text has not only triggered a number of reinterpretations of the traditional macho image of Hemingway and his work, but has led to a revaluation of Hemingway to revisit him as a writer who dealt with gender issues “in their full diversity and complexity” (Sanderson 171).

2. While several gender readings have contributed to a “Hemingway renaissance” (Larson 278), the subject of race has generally been excluded from this critical revaluation of Hemingway’s life and work. For instance, Mark Spilka, while acknowledging the influence on Hemingway of Victorian imperial fictions, especially those of Kipling and Marryat, fails to explore the connections between their racial imagery and Hemingway’s own representations of racial Otherness. Similarly, most studies of *The Garden of Eden*, such as those of J. Gerald Kennedy and Nancy McCampbell Grace, have emphasized the text’s gender and sexual transgressions, while neglecting the constant interaction between sexual and racial subversion throughout the book. As a result, the issue of race has been repeatedly left out of Hemingway (gender) criticism.

3. Despite its (very) apparent absence, race, in general, and blackness, in particular, can be shown to pervade Hemingway’s presumably “raceless” or “white” texts. For example, in *The Sun Also Rises*, Hemingway constructs both sexual and racial difference, particularly Jewishness, as “forms of marginality Jake withdraws from” (Traber 235). Racial otherness recurs in many other Hemingway works, too, from *Green Hills of Africa* to stories such as “The Battler” where the white protagonists, whether hunters in Africa or ex-fighters, are continually assisted by hunting guides, cooks, maids, bartenders, etc. who are almost always black. Yet, despite this long list of black characters, they remain, paradoxically enough, largely overlooked by Hemingway scholars. Moreover, Hemingway’s portraiture of blackness, when discussed at all, has often been dismissed as racist. If one study on *The Sun Also Rises* has analyzed Jake Barnes’s racist views on both blacks and Jews, who are turned into “a viable Other to give his world meaning” (Traber 235), others have underlined the racist components of texts such as *Green Hills of Africa* and *To Have and Have Not*, as well as several of his short stories (Seydow 36; Harrow 193).

4. Just as Eby’s study on Hemingway’s fetishism has shown how *The Garden of Eden* treats racial difference and dark skin as fetish
objects, so Comley and Scholes have linked Catherine Bourne’s obsession with tanning in *The Garden of Eden* to Hemingway’s own eroticization of blackness and interracial sexuality. Ultimately, then, these critical works have shown how the text’s emphasis on sexual crossing cannot be isolated from Catherine/Hemingway’s desire for sex across racial boundaries.

5. On Hemingway and the “Paris years,” see Reynolds.

6. In *Hemingway’s Quarrel with Androgyny* (1990), for example, Mark Spilka (2–3) suggests that while Hemingway’s machismo had hardened through the 1930s, “the period of public displays of virility and of fictional provings of masculine integrity,” his strenuous ideal of manhood would relax by the 1950s, when he finally accepted and embraced his long-repressed androgyny.

7. Admittedly, white Americans had long associated dominant manhood with white supremacy. During the century, for example, American citizenship rights had been defined as “manhood” rights, which inhered to white males only. Indeed, pro-slavery writers often call into question the manhood of black men and, therefore, their “manhood rights.” For example, in *Six Species of Men* (1866), by an anonymous author, one reads that “another peculiarity of the negro is absence of beard. The Caucasian is really the only bearded race, and this is the most striking mark of its supremacy over all others” (qtd. in DiPiero 121). Like women, Negro males, whether free or slaves, were considered “dependents” and, therefore, forbidden to vote or join the military, among other “civil” (i.e., “manhood”) rights and responsibilities. Even though the “feminization” of black males was thus no novelty, by the 1880s white Americans, influenced by the dominant discourses of imperialism and Darwinism, seemed to become increasingly obsessed with linking masculinity to whiteness through the racial discourse of “civilization.”

8. See also DiPiero (119–121) and Dyer (*White* 148–153).

9. For most critics, *Green Hills of Africa* illustrates Hemingway’s increased incorporation of his *macho* public image into his books, to the detriment of his work. Edmund Wilson’s review accused Hemingway of beginning to be influenced by “the American publicity legend which has been created about him” (218) John Chamberlain concurred, defining as “all attitude, all Byronic posturing” (150). Similarly, J. Bakker complained that in *Green Hills of Africa* Hemingway had abandoned his function as an artist to the “single-minded, unreflective mentality of the man of action” (128), just as Strychacz (45) insisted that the writer, bearing witness to his own self-aggrandizement, lost the detachment and
self-control that his code heroes most famously embodied and replaced it with an “inflated sense of self.”

10. It may be true that Hemingway’s fantasies of masculine autonomy are undermined by their very dependence on women and black men. As Strychacz reminds us, “Hemingway never hunts without guides, never hunts without the applause of the guides or Pop, and never hunts without an anticipated hero’s return to Poor Old Mama back at camp” (39). Nevertheless, Hemingway’s theater of manhood is always directed by white men, just as it is always women and black men who act as foils to the white man’s self-image. While neither independent nor self-generated, white masculinity in *Green Hills* thus remains indubitably dominant, deriving its hegemony from the systemic oppression of Other-ed groups.

11. Obviously, POM’s *real* subordination as Hemingway’s partner remains open to questioning. After all, it must be remembered, as Barlowe-Kayes (174) skilfully notes, that women in Hemingway’s fiction are usually represented from his perspective, not theirs. There is little doubt, however, about her submissive *fictional* role whereby she always serves and supports rather than governs.

12. Morrison applies these linguistic strategies to the analysis of two different books by Hemingway, *To Have and Have Not* and *The Garden of Eden* (Playing 69–90).

13. Interestingly, he sees “no bloody difference” between Africa and Spain, either, “only the buildings” (*GHO* 151). In Hemingway’s view, then, not only Africans but all nonwhite and/or non-American citizens seem to look alike.

14. Thus, *A Farewell to Arms* (1929) exemplifies the shift from youthful enthusiasm for the war to weary disaffection, just as in several of his war stories, such as “Now I Lay Me” or “A Way You’ll Never Be,” we see Nick Adams suffering badly from shell shock. As Spilka elaborates, “there is no uplift here; the effect is of deadly disillusionment under which Nick bears up as well as he can” (119).

15. See, for example, Eby (155–183) as well as Comley and Scholes (75–103).

16. See, for instance, Lewis and Fleming (xiii–xiv).

17. The Mau-Mau Uprising (1952–1960) was a military conflict between a Kikuyu-dominated anticolonial group and British colonial powers in Kenya. The revolt that set the stage for Kenyan independence also motivated other African countries to overturn colonial governments.

18. Several of Hemingway’s later stories seem to illustrate a changed attitude toward hunting. For example, “An African Story,” as a
story within a story in *The Garden of Eden*, Spilka argues that Hemingway “allows his young protagonist to find in the elephant a hero and brother, to resist and resent his killing...and to react to the elephant’s feelings as to human feelings” (301).

19. In *To Have and Have Not* (1937), for example, Hemingway systematically silences Wesley, the black man, even though Wesley also despises Harry Morgan and tells him, “You ain’t hardly human.” See Toni Morrison’s seminal analysis of the representation of blackness in this novel, and several other stories by Hemingway (Morrison *Playing* 69–83), all of which seem to depict the black man ambiguously, or, in Morrison’s words, as “master as well as slave, destroyer as well as caretaker” (83).

4 Dark Objects of Desire: The Blackness of (Homo)Sexuality in James Baldwin’s *Giovanni’s Room*

1. Interestingly, Dial Press decided to exclude Baldwin’s photograph from the text, which, as James Campbell (106) has argued, suggests that part of the publisher’s fear was in having a black man associated with an “all-white” novel—especially one about homosexuality.

2. Similarly, both Richard Wright and Martin Luther King Jr. disparaged Baldwin because of his homosexuality (Campbell 71, 175).

3. Even Langston Hughes, another black gay writer, saw Baldwin’s overt treatment of homosexuality as a threat to traditional black values. Hughes, who considered it necessary to sublimate homosexual desire (at least in his novels) for the sake of racial harmony and wholeness, associated Baldwin’s representations of (interracial) (homo/bi)sexuality, particularly in *Another Country*, with integration, and integration with the loss of traditional black values (Ross 34).

4. In contrast to the (white) homosexual relationships engaged in by characters such as Eric and Yves in *Another Country* or David and Giovanni in *Giovanni’s Room*, it is not until 1968, with the publication of *Tell Me How Long the Train’s Been Gone*, that Baldwin explores overt sexual relations between two black men in a novel, and not until 1979, with *Just Above My Head*, his last novel, that he focuses on love between two black men, both of whom are exclusively homosexual (as opposed to bisexual characters such as Rufus Scott in *Another Country* or Leo Proudhammer in *Tell Me How Long the Train’s Been Gone*).

5. See also Hoch (49–50).
6. In associating homosexuality with blackness, I am consciously questioning the views held by both Dyer (2007) and Stokes (2001), who see homosexuality as the most evident expression of whiteness. Dyer (White 219–20), for example, argues that homosexuality remains obstinately white in popular representations since it is linked to death, given its double association with AIDS and a nonreproductive form of sexuality. Similarly, Stokes (Color 18) contends that to reproduce whiteness sexually is to risk contamination, and so heterosexuality poses a challenge to whiteness, “one that can only be avoided if that heterosexuality is less important than the homosociality that it facilitates.” As he elaborates, “Homoeroticism becomes, paradoxically, the only structure of desire that can keep whiteness white” (Stokes Color 18). Unlike these scholars, however, I will be arguing not only that heterosexuality may be made “respectable” and channeled into whiteness through heterosexual marriage but also that homosexuality, at least in Baldwin’s text, is assimilated into blackness, rather than whiteness, as a mode of difference.

7. At a structural rather than individual level, Africa has also been depicted as the Dark Continent itself, “cloaca of the West” (Kovel 171).

8. Interestingly, David’s dream about his mother is also associated with putrefaction: “I scarcely remember her at all, yet she figured in my nightmares, blind with worms, her hair as dry as metal and brittle as a twig, straining to press me against her body; that body so putrescent, so sickening soft, that it opened, as I clawed and cried, into a breach so enormous as to swallow me alive” (Baldwin Giovanni’s 12–13). Thus, David also links putrefaction to the female body, and also fears, as he does with Joey, being engulfed by it. In other words, David is repelled by both male and female bodies, for any kind of sexual desire, as psychoanalysis has shown, threatens to loosen, even dissolve, the identity boundaries of the rigid male body (Beneke 73–112). See also Kaplan (1996) on the representation of the feminine in Baldwin’s novel.

9. David also informs us that the Parisian newspapers reported the murder of Guillaume, although they didn’t mention the (sexual) circumstances explicitly, since “why was too black for the newsprint to carry” (Baldwin Giovanni’s 202–203; emphasis added).

10. As Reid-Pharr has argued, American in Baldwin’s novel “refers not simply to a geographical location…but also to a patriarchal economy that produces maleness as the lack of lack” (Black 131).


12. After all, at novel’s end, David seems determined to leave Giovanni (and, therefore, racial and sexual difference) behind; only the wind
blows it back on him, reminding him of the futility of his intentions. As David tells us, “I take the blue envelope which Jacques has sent me [and which contains the date and hour of Giovanni’s execution] and tear it slowly into many pieces, watching them dance in the wind, watching the wind carry them away. Yet, as I turn and begin walking toward the waiting people, the wind blows some of them back on me” (Baldwin Giovanni’s 224).

5 Race and Gender in the Mirror: A (White) Woman’s Look at (Black) Racism in Martha Gellhorn’s “White into Black”

1. My heartfelt thanks to my friend Dr. César Chelala for drawing my attention to Martha Gellhorn’s “White into Black” when I mentioned to him my work on black and white relations over a lovely dinner in New York City a few years ago.

2. Nevertheless, Hemingway’s plan did not finally turn out as expected, since Martha decided to travel to London anyway. As Hemingway had taken the last seat on the plane, she was forced to embark on a long voyage, after which she decided to leave him (Kert 392).

3. Even though Hemingway seemed to admire Martha’s courage, he also resented her fierce independence and ambition. While she often felt confined by domesticity, Ernest became increasingly resentful at her absences for her work assignments with Collier’s. Indeed, he sent her several cables that read “ARE YOU A WAR CORRESPONDENT OR WIFE IN MY BED?” (Kert 391).

4. She thought that once men “got” her, they wanted to “change” her (Shakespeare 223). When Nicholas Shakespeare interviewed and asked her if she was ever lonely, she replied, “I was only lonely when I was married” (Shakespeare 219). On Gellhorn’s failed marriage to Hemingway, see also Barlowe (143–144) and Kert (391–392).

5. However, after the publication of Martha’s novel Liana, he wrote to his mother saying that it “was better than anything he had written” (Shakespeare 230).

6. Indeed, Gellhorn spent some time with Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt, living with them at the White House in 1935 while she worked on the first draft of The Trouble I’ve Seen (1936), a popular collection of stories based on field interviews with struggling American people during the Depression years. The collection, as Reynolds reminds us, moved Eleanor Roosevelt to do “a public reading from the collection in New York and to recommend the book to readers of her newspaper column” (256–257).
7. See Reynolds (257).
8. As Shakespeare explains, Martha could not help “throwing herself into the cause of Brazilian Street children” after she “read reports of destitute and defenceless little girls, ‘killed as casually as if they were rabbits with myxomatosis’” (226).
9. Martha’s indictment of all types of racism seems to derive, at least in part, from her upbringing. Indeed, her parents, whose Jewish origins had obliged them to migrate to the United States because of the growing anti-Semitism in Europe, forbade her to refer to people by their race or color. As her biographer Caroline Moorehead elaborates, “the Gellhorn house was one of the very few white houses in St Louis where black people came regularly for meals, and Martha was encouraged to bicycle to visit a black woman friend of the family” (14).
10. As Butler insists, race and gender are not only related but “inextricably linked” (174) and “articulated through one another” (182). Indeed, Butler has called into question the (white) feminist assumption that sexual difference is more fundamental than racial difference and, therefore, that sexual difference it itself “unmarked by race” or that “whiteness is not a form of racial difference” (181–182). In her view, then, what is necessary is to racialize (white) gender norms so as to try to understand “what convergent set of historical formations of racialized gender, of gendered race, of the sexualization of racial ideals, or the racialization of gender norms, makes up both the social regulation of sexuality and its psychic articulations” (182).
11. It must be remembered, in this respect, that Thomas Jefferson himself fathered at least one black child by Sally Hemings. While male slave owners often raped slaves, the children of which were defined as black slaves because they were born to black mothers, the children of affairs between black men and white women were, paradoxically enough, legally free according to antebellum laws. See Goodale and Engels (73) in this respect, who argue that, given the tradition of miscegenation in the South, many “Southern whites were only passing as such” (76).
12. While Tom is spoilt, Chambers is thus treated as slave: “Tom got all the petting, Chambers got none. Tom got all the delicacies, Chambers got mush and milk, and clabber without sugar” (Pudd’nhead 30).
13. Despite her unsophisticated manner of speech, which gave her away as a slave, Roxy may hardly be described as black. “To all intents and purposes,” Twain writes, “Roxy was as white as anybody, but the one-sixteenth of her which was black outvoted the other fifteen parts and made her a negro. She was a slave,
and salable as such” (Pudd’nhead 16). Like Roxy, her son is also described as being of “mixed blood,” even if he is only 1/32 part black, and “had blue eyes and flaxen curls like his white comrade” (Pudd’nhead 16). However, unlike Thomas à Becket Driscoll, “Tom,” Valet de Chambre, “Chambers,” is poorly dressed and has no surname since “slaves hadn’t the privilege” (16). Besides criticizing the hypocrisy of the whites who labeled people like Roxana and her son black, but indulged in interracial sex resulting in miscegenation, Twain’s irony underlines the absurdity of a (white) law that made into slaves two people who were,respectively, 15/16 and 31/32 parts white.

14. Indeed, Roxy decides to tell her son about his real identity as a negro only after he abuses her on several occasions, threatening to reveal his real identity if he keeps mistreating her. As Tom complains right after his mother’s revelation, “how hard the nigger’s fate seems, this morning!—yet until last night such a thought never entered my head” (Pudd’nhead 71). However, if Tom first sympathizes with the blacks’ plight, briefly identifying with the blacks’ “humility” (Pudd’nhead 77) when dealing with the whites, he will soon go back to his usual self, refusing to buy her mother back from slavery and becoming a robber (and eventually a murderer) to continue gambling.

15. Although Roxana seems to have internalized racism, attributing her son’s meanness and cowardice to the “nigger in you,” Twain seems to make clear that, although Tom is evil in many respects, his mother, who has twice as much black blood as her son has, is not evil but, as Nayak K. rightly notes, “surpassingly superior to him, and even the Whites” (41). Thus, Twain seemed to suggest that decadent and self-centered white characters like Tom had a lot to learn from humane black characters like Roxy. Indeed, he defended miscegenation explicitly when he suggested that black Africans “should have been crossed with the Whites. It would have improved the Whites and done the Natives no harm” (Twain Following 265). He also referred to “the added disadvantage of the white complexion which is bleached out, unwholesome and sometimes, frankly ghostly” (Twain Following 50). As Jay Martin argued, Twain’s “real self” could easily be considered “a black child disguised as a white man” (60).

16. Interestingly, as Philip Brian Harper reminds us, several of the black (gay) (male) authors of the Harlem Renaissance—such as Countee Cullen, Wallace Thurman, and Alain Locke—were accused of “insufficient racial identification” and, therefore, of embodying “a failed manhood, for which homosexuality, as
always, was the primary signifier” (50). In other words, the adoption of white social norms by these black writers was gendered as feminine, with blackness being equated with masculinity. A correlation was thus established between racial and gender norms, with the passing novel representing whiteness and, therefore, femininity as well as the “demise of black masculinity” (Harper 126).

17. Harper himself insists on the ambiguity of these novels. On the one hand, passing, despite its assimilational nature, entails some circulation in the public realm, away from the fundamentally private realm of feminine domesticity (118). Moreover, the passing attempts of these heroines also threaten to result in miscegenation, a “violation of the governing racial/sexual order,” thus challenging the “bourgeois, masculinist, black nuclear family” conceived as the precondition of “racial uplift” (115).

18. As is known, the ending of the novel remains ambiguous, as it is unclear whether she simply faints and falls, or her husband gives her “a shove” (Larsen 274).

19. Ralph Ellison’s classic mid-century novel, *Invisible Man* (1952), associated this Othering experience with the idea of “invisibility,” as whites “refuse to see” blacks except through “mirrors of hard, distorting glass” (3).

20. Such exoticization is reflected, for example, in the custom in the village of “buying” African natives for the purpose of converting them to Christianity. As Baldwin himself explains:

> There stands in the church all year round a small box with a slot for money, decorated with a black figurine, and into this box the villagers drop their francs. During the carnaval which precedes Lent, two village children have their faces blackened—out of which bloodless darkness their blue eyes shine like ice—and fantastic horsehair wigs are placed on their blond heads; thus disguised, they solicit among the villagers for money for the missionaries in Africa. Between the box in the church and the blackened children, the village “bought” last year six or eight African natives. (*Notes* 163)

21. As David Roediger (*Wages* 118, 97) has argued, (lower class) Irish and German characters performing black ones on the minstrel stage helped transform formerly distinct European ethnicities into a common “whiteness,” which allowed them to preserve their emerging racial privileges despite their working-class background. See also Lott.

22. As Harper reminds us, Griffin was not only passing as a Negro but also, and more significantly, as a “Negro man”(120) that
distinguishes this text from others like Grace Halsell’s *Soul Sister* (1969), a novel that may be seen as a female version of the genre.

23. According to Saidiya Hartman, for instance, whites tended to “appropriate” blackness by turning black characters into a white body and, in so doing, “purified” and concealed interracial culture and miscegenation. For Hartman, the white audience possessed “blackness or the black body as a sentimental resource and/or locus of excess enjoyment” (108). In other words, the object of identification for whites was based on a “false-empathy” that erased racial difference and that, ultimately, “was more about the self than the other” (Goodale and Engels 74). Admittedly, Hartman’s view of (white) empathy as false and as promoting subjection rather than political change may be and has been questioned by numerous scholars, perhaps most notably Jane Tompkins. Indeed, Tompkins (124–146) has read the famous episode of little Eva’s death in Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (1851–1852), often dismissed as a paradigmatic example of sentimental (and so apolitical) fiction, as one of the most powerful indictments against slavery and in favor of abolitionism. Rather than evade their social reality, sentimental writers such as Stowe, according to Tompkins, use emotions to promote the whites’ identification with blacks, and thus bring about radical political change.

24. See Harper (161–162) for an in-depth discussion of the long-lasting and ongoing debate between black “authenticity” (often understood as being synonymous with the portraiture of socially disadvantaged groups) and/or versus the “diversity” of black experience.

25. As Fanon (19–20) explains, any Martinican Negro who has been to France is “deified” as a “new man” upon his return. Paradoxically, however, the Antillean who travels to Europe to try to convince himself that he is white will also find his “real face” there (Fanon 153). Thus, the returning Antillean ends up feeling estranged from both his own people, who see him as too “white,” and from the European French, who despised him for being black.

26. Insisting further, Fanon contends that it is the only after his encounter with the white European world that black Antilleans start behaving as Negroes, as “it is the racist who creates his inferior” (93). In other words, he argues that the Antilles Negro “discovers” his blackness only when he the white man imposes discrimination on him. This leads, in turn, to his suffering from not being a white man, which he tries to compensate for by making himself white, that is, by rejecting his blackness and trying to convince the white man that he is as white (i.e., human) as he is.
27. Fanon also reminds us of the existence of a racial hierarchy among blacks, reminding us that many “North Africans despised men of color” (102).

28. This, however, becomes impossible since the white man has constructed the black man as his absolute Other, creating in him not only an inferiority complex but also a “dependency complex” whereby blackness can only be defined in opposition to whiteness (Fanon 97–98, 108–113). In this way, the white keeps treating the black man as an animal, depriving him of his manhood and humanity. “For not only must the black man be black; he must be black in relation to the white man” (Fanon 110).

29. Interestingly, in the chapter titled “The Fact of Blackness,” Frantz Fanon similarly recalls the moment when he “discovered” his “blackness,” that is, his racial difference, as a white child pointed at him shouting, “Look, a Negro! . . . Look, a Negro! . . . Mama, see the Negro! I’m frightened!” (112).

30. White racism in Haiti thus seemed to be inseparable from its colonial history, when the island had been a French colony called Saint Domingue for well over a hundred years. By 1952, however, the island had been a sovereign state for almost one hundred and fifty years and thus white racism virtually disappeared. It is true that, from 1915 to 1934, the US Marines, who accepted no Negroes in the Marine Corps, had been sent to restore order in Haiti, and so Haitians had been “treated like American Negroes” (Gellhorn 101). This was the only time, however, when Haitians had known white racism since colonial times.

31. Clearly, Gellhorn associates racism with deprivation, ignorance, and illiteracy, insisting that she was the only customer of Jacmel’s library, with Haiti having at the time “the fewest schools, teachers and literates” (102–103).

32. As may be recalled, Irene’s words in the novel are addressed to Hugh, a white male character whose only response to this comment is, tellingly enough, “I never thought of that” (Larsen 237). “No, you wouldn’t. Why should you? (237), Irene ironically replies, thus revealing Hugh’s lack of racial (self-) consciousness as a privilege of whiteness.

33. I am borrowing the term here from Goodale and Engels (77), who define them as historical “erasures” that “produce lacunae” and “reveal insecurities” leading to “double meanings” and, thus, to interracial misunderstandings and misrepresentations.

34. Such black masculinist rhetoric, as Wiegman (71) rightly notes, may indeed be traced back even further to texts such as Frederick Douglass’s “The Heroic Slave” (1853), with his concepts of heroic
body, democracy, and the nation-state, or founding “fathers” colliding with narratives of traditional masculinity.

35. As Fanon insists, the “quest for white flesh” (81) has long been integral to black manhood, with many black men trying to “marry white culture, white beauty, white whiteness” (Fanon 63). Owing to racism and racist distortions, many black men tried to marry white women as a symbol of whiteness and status. As Fanon puts it, “By loving me she proves that I am worthy of white love. I am loved like a white man” (63).

36. Indeed, strong independent women were recurrently stereotyped as “loose” by masculinist discourses. In Nella Larsen’s *Passing*, for instance, Irene tells Clare not to attend a dance party on her own, as “she’ll be taken as a prostitute” (Butler 184).

37. My reading of Gellhorn’s story here relies heavily on the seminal study of Nella Larsen’s *Passing* by Judith Butler, who (re-)reads this novel connecting racial and sexual difference.

38. See Wiegman (5–7).

39. While not explicitly stated, there may also be a hint at the internalization of sexism by Madame Croft and some other (black) women in Jacmel, who despise Gellhorn for being a “Negro” but also, perhaps, for being a woman, especially one traveling on her own.

40. See Barlowe (138). Interestingly, Gellhorn’s lifelong concern with fighting poverty, injustice, and class inequalities seemed to follow the example set by her grandmother, Martha Ellis, who, despite belonging to the nineteenth-century genteel society, decided to become a teacher, “virtually an unheard-of-act for a woman of her social prominence” (Rollyson 5).


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