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Strangers in Blood: Relocating Race in the Renaissance

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Strangers in Blood:

Relocating Race in the Renaissance

5 High Spirits, Nature's Ranks, and Ligon's Indies

In an entry in his *Diary* dated 19 August 1668, John Evelyn records his first experience of seeing and tasting the Barbadian fruit 'called the king-pine,' a fruit whose exceptional powers he had read about in Richard Ligon's *True & Exact History of the Island of Barbados*, which first appeared in print in 1657.¹ Evelyn's recollection of the event places the royal fruit among a host of other regal emblems: a banqueting house, a richly ornate coach, and an arriving figure of state. Moreover, at the centre of the representation, the axis around which all these signs converge, Evelyn recalls the presence of the monarch, who offers him a sample of the royal fruit from his own plate. The diarist eagerly complies and proceeds to taste the rich confection. And yet, moments later, he concedes that he found the experience to be somewhat of a disappointment. Though he grants that the fruit has merits – in resembling the flavor of a melon or a quince – the fact is that he has been led to expect more, anticipating the 'ravishing varieties of deliciousness described in Capt. Ligon's history.' That is, he was hoping to sample the *king* of fruits – what Ligon describes as 'far beyond the best fruit that grows in England, as the best Abricot is beyond the worst Slow or Crab' – rather than a fruit approaching England's quite ordinary melons or quinces.² By referring to the 'rare fruit' of Barbados as one item in a sequence of superlatives, Evelyn confers a stature equivalent to each of these cultural emblems on this princely artefact of nature. His eye moves from the regal figures at court to nature's emblems of royalty as though they were part of a single continuum.

Evelyn's description of the event is compelling for expressing in pre-

cise material form the way a narrative such as Ligon's account of Barbados could actively shape the desires of a reading public back home in England. Evelyn has, it seems, been titillated by the profuse praise Ligon heaps on the fruit. If Ligon's purpose in writing is to 'stir the hunger of prospective settlers' for the colonial project under way in Barbados, as Keith Sandiford suggests it was, this account testifies to Ligon's success.³ Evelyn does betray an appetite whetted by the exceptional products available in Barbados. Moreover, that he attributes the pineapple's mediocrity to the fact of its 'impairment' in transport suggests that despite his disappointment, he yet believes the fruit once possessed the royal properties attested to by Ligon. But I would like to press this episode beyond a claim about how the text may stoke English desires for colonial possessions. I am interested in the cultural logic that Evelyn, like Ligon, expresses in the associations he makes. Insofar as Evelyn's account locates the pinnacle of Barbados's natural landscape – the 'king-pine' – at the English court, where its status as a natural emblem of royalty functions homologously to confirm Charles II's authority, it does more than express a textually induced desire. It encapsulates in small an epistemology central to Evelyn, Ligon, and Stuart ideology of seventeenth-century England, which openly acknowledges the extent to which the social system is entangled with and around the sphere of nature.⁴ Not yet devoted to supporting the pretense that these two realms are distinct, which Bruno Latour will describe as the province of modernity, the cultural logic captured in this little episode allows that the realm of the 'non-human,' of the natural world, is profoundly constitutive of the social polity, of the relations that govern the world of humans.⁵ 'Pristine' nature – in Barbados or at court – is revealed in this moment to be always already infused with cultural categories and, in turn, to possess the power to uphold or to undermine socio-political relations.

Ligon, like Evelyn, was a gentleman with ties to the court, taking up the royalist cause during the Civil War in serving as a royal official in Devon before seeking in Barbados refuge from the violence in June of 1647.⁶ He would remain on the island for more than two years, agreeing to assist Colonel Modiford, who had accompanied him on the journey, in his bid to take over William Hilliard's plantation (22).⁷ In 1650 he returned to England only to be thrown into debtor's prison, having offered himself as 'standing surety' for the debts of his long-time friend Sir Henry Killigrew.⁸ It was here that he would write about his journey – dating his dedicatory letter 12 July 1653 – although it would wait another four years before appearing in print in 1657. The account begins with

the shape of the journey itself, describing their passage from England along the coast of Spain and past the 'Maderas'; embedding an extended description of their sojourn on the Portuguese island of Sao Tiago – Englished by Ligon as 'St Iago' – in Cape Verde; and recounting their eventual arrival to Barbados. Here the form of the narrative shifts, moving from a personal account of daily events into a broad history of the social, political, and natural forms of life on the island from the time of its earliest settlement by the English. Compellingly, had the original plan for the journey been fulfilled, Ligon might never have written this account, since we learn his intent was actually 'to plant' in 'Antigoa.' Such plans shifted when the group fell ill and when the ship from Plymouth, carrying 'men victuals, and all utensils fitted for a Plantation,' miscarried at sea (21–2). Due to these mishaps, Ligon's time in Barbados was extended indefinitely, providing him with the chance to observe all manner of life on the island, details that would later cohere as a 'history.'

Although the account describes an island far distant from the turmoil of England – one positioned in 'the Southern and Western parts of the World' (Dedicatory Letter) – it is a powerful record of and response to the world he left behind, expressing not just a socio-political orientation but a complete epistemology, one perhaps sharpened by the challenges put to it by republican ideology.⁹ As with Evelyn, this epistemology achieves powerful expression in and through Ligon's account of nature, specifically the way he perceives the island's natural forms as fully entangled with social principles. As we will see, he discovers principles of rank and order everywhere in the island's rustic landscape, identifying natural forms like the king-pine fruit and the regal palmetto tree in a landscape of presumably queenly attributes. But the conflation of natural and social categories that recurs in the text expresses, I propose, more than just an interest in and excitement about the land's natural wonders, more than just a sense of its strange majesty. I read them as registering a more complex and layered response to the larger enterprise of transplantation, specifically, English efforts to settle the isle. That is to say, in identifying as elite the natural forms that grace the Barbadian landscape, Ligon reveals the island's ability to support English gentility, the very social system being decimated by the wars under way in England. As such, although his account of Barbadian nature seems far removed from the hand of culture, in fact it is intimately connected to its processes and systems, devoted, at heart, to a larger cultural effort to preserve 'aristocratic and royalist structures, styles and attitudes' in the face of their erosion.¹⁰ That he views nature – the natural world of Barbados – as the

origin, source, and transmitter of these sociopolitical structures reveals a lot about this moment. It indicates that even at this mid-seventeenth-century point – at the peak of the social transition this book has been tracing – the links between culture and nature – and the naturalizing of a rigid social hierarchy derived from such linkages – continued to anchor English perceptions of the world, gaining forceful expression in royalist writings of the period.

Such assumptions had powerful implications for colonization, since they seemed to require a symbiosis between natural forms and cultural forms. Civility or social distinction, such views maintained, derived from principles present and visible in nature. But in travelling to strange lands, an English elite was forced to confront a powerful contradiction lingering beneath the surface of these assumptions. In England, this contradiction remained concealed – civility was encoded in countless ways in a surrounding natural environment, with the effect that its relation to environment went unquestioned. But in venturing out to distant lands, this dilemma reared its prickly head, raising the question of whether wild, savage, and barbarous lands might sabotage elite cultural forms, whether they might completely erode civility and social distinction. Would movement far from England evoke necessary decline? We have seen how such a view shapes Spenser's account of an Old English aristocracy in Ireland, insofar as he perceives this group as having allowed their distance from court and their proximity to a 'savage' environment to allow their nobility of blood to become marred, defined by excess and even tyranny. Only by tightly controlling that environment – remaking it in civil form – could such a slide be arrested, an argument Spenser develops in his political tract on Ireland.¹¹ The categorical overlap between nature and culture that continued to be the centrepiece of English culture insisted on a reciprocal relation between these terms, with nature holding the power to support or undo what we today would call cultural forms, and vice versa. To date, critics have tended to emphasize the power early moderns conferred on culture over nature, insofar as our accounts of colonization have tended to be about the 'domination' and 'mastery' of nature. But the idea that nature might act upon and, indeed, serve as a condition of culture – which I read as an ever-present assumption of Ligon's *History* – has not yet been fully appreciated.

The twinning of these categories has profound implications, broadly speaking, for how we construe early modern culture, as critics have observed in the context of discussing the period's production of knowledge.¹² But I suggest that this conceptual overlay needs to inform our

accounts of the period's ideologies of difference as well. Critics of race have already identified Ligon's text as crucial material for their analyses, mining the *History* for what it reveals about England's early involvement in the slave trade.¹³ His text is widely accepted by historians as straddling a crucial transition, having been written 'in the middle of the "sugar revolution,"' when Barbados shifted from a mixed labour economy – depending largely on indentured servants from England, Scotland, and Ireland – to one primarily dependent on the labour of African slaves.¹⁴ This shift in the dominant mode of production was accompanied, as Susan Amussen has argued, by a 'profound shift in social relations,' requiring the English 'to create new institutional and legal structures, reorganize work, and change their relations with each other.' It 'drew upon and reshaped English ideas of identity,' instating a system of social relations 'where the wealthiest exercised power untempered by reciprocity' and where 'no attempt was made to mask the use of naked force in social control.'¹⁵ In other words, it required a reorganization of a social form 'characterized by vertical alignments of patronage and clientage, paternalism and deference,'¹⁶ a shift, that is, in social relations deeply connected to a system of race and blood. Although Ligon's text is often read as powerfully complicit in these developments, as evidenced by his support of planter culture and a relative indifference to the predicament of the African slaves labouring in those plantations, I see evidence in the text of resistance to these transitions, ideological obstacles that stood in the path of such change. Such a reading is not motivated by a concern to distance Ligon from association with slavery; rather, it aims to show the continuing sway of residual ideologies of difference in this crucial context of England's first slave-holding plantation, and to emphasize the cultural reorganization involved in the naturalizing of slavery.

It is Ligon's account of nature that I see as crucial to observing the continued grip of such ideologies. Although this emphasis is often overlooked in readings concerned with his representation of social relations on the island, in fact Ligon underscores it in his title for the tract. The extended title explicitly announces its focus on natural forms, noting that it will be '*Illustrated with a Mapp of the Island, as also the Principall Trees and Plants there, set forth in their due Proportions and Shapes, drawne out by their severall and respective Scales ...*' It is this representation of nature that can shed light on the changing social relations of the moment, since Ligon's tendency to see natural and cultural forms as embedded one with the other constitutes a significant break between early modern race and the modern category that will supersede it. As Ezra Tawil has argued,

modern racial ideologies depend on defining the realms of nature and culture in opposition to one another, construing racial features as inalterable ascriptions of nature.¹⁷ Culture cannot undo the imprint that nature confers in a modern epistemology; biology is a sphere quite separate from culture. The logic of difference that informs Ligon's epistemology, by contrast, conceives of the relation between these terms quite differently. Not positing an opposition, Ligon understands these terms homologically, as versions of each other. If modernity conceives of nature as beyond the purview of culture, in Ligon's moment there is no ontological state of being 'outside' of culture. Rather, the realms that we define as distinct and even in tension, he defines as concordant, as abiding by the same governing principles.¹⁸

We can see this overlap most forcefully through the ordering scheme that bridges the realms of human, plant, and animal in Ligon's text. Compellingly, the human is not set in opposition to 'the natural,' whether 'animal' or 'plant,' a notion that enables the grip of modern race. Rather, these realms – if we can refer to them in the plural – function as nested versions of each other, each organized internally around a set of gradated differences. Crucially, each is marked with inscriptions of degree, revealing the presence of high and low forms, exalted and depressed forms, and distinct and indistinct forms. And yet, if these relations of hierarchy locate each life form within a precise rank and degree, they also resist defining any one of its members – even the lowest – as 'essentially' or 'naturally' different from the others, as will be the case under the racial ideologies of a later moment. When Ligon speaks of the different human groups in Barbados – planter, servant, and slave – or when he speaks of kinds of vegetation on the island – from the royal palmetto to the weedy 'withs' – he implicitly positions each form within a precise hierarchy, identifying the highest ranking form in each group, but also the lesser and more middling forms that compose them. What this repetition reveals is that if there is a crucial difference of race or 'kind' that Ligon's premodern epistemology expresses, instates, and operates on the basis of, it is a difference of degree.¹⁹ For him, such difference bears an ontological charge, so that the difference of 'rank' that he perceives in the royal palmetto as against the lesser palmettos amounts to nothing less than 'an addition to the nature' (75). If the two kinds of trees share a name – in being both palmettos – they do not share a nature, held apart, as they are, by the ontological difference of rank. Looking into the mirror of human culture that was nature, Ligon perceives a world ripe with difference organized along a vertical continuum

It is this principle of degree, I suggest, that collides with the oppositional thinking that modern race fosters and depends upon, and that constitutes instead an early modern taxonomy of difference.

To construe relations among living creatures in this way is, I have argued, fundamentally in tension with the logic of modern race and with modern epistemologies more at large. To the extent that we seek to identify the 'origins' of modernity in texts of this earlier era, we will overlook just how insistently Ligon and his contemporaries express premodern ways of knowing and inhabiting the world. In this chapter I attempt to retrieve this very different cosmology, by highlighting its presence in Ligon's text across a range of discursive fields, from natural philosophy, to humoral theory, to generic practice. What I seek to uncover in assessing Ligon's assumptions about each of these fields of knowledge is his tendency to conjoin categories that will subsequently be ruptured: natural forms with social hierarchies; the embodied form of slaves with that of masters; and pleasurable fictions with 'scientific' truths. His assumptions in each of these domains records the continuing sway at this mid-seventeenth-century moment of premodern epistemologies, which signal their difference from modernity by confounding the oppositions that have since come to inform conceptions of knowledge, race, and genre.

Critical Dichotomies

By emphasizing the centrality of 'crossings' from nature to culture and back again, which Ligon's text insists on, is to position a reading of Ligon's and other early plantation narratives within recent criticism observing the radical interpenetration of embodiment and environment.²⁰ This work has indicated the extent to which the early moderns conceived of themselves as quite shot through with the world they inhabited, bearing the imprint of the material world's elemental properties and qualities. In one of the striking metaphors deployed by critics of the school, the human body figures in its properties and attributes as a 'pongy' being, imbibing the diverse and changing properties of a surrounding world.²¹ In urging the interpenetration of physical body and natural world, these studies have pressed earlier accounts of the early modern period that located the emergence of an autonomous subject, and, by implication, a disembodied consciousness in Renaissance tragedy.²² Insofar as the new critical school has drawn attention to the profound impressionability and receptivity of a pre-Cartesian subject, by

characterizing that subject as perhaps not much more than a 'physico-cognitive space' gathering accretions of various natural properties that it absorbs in travelling through worlds small and wide, it has disassembled the earlier narrative.

But if this criticism has reminded us of the elemental forces that surround and shape human culture, it has also not fully abandoned the 'Great Divide' that modernity instates between nature and culture, in that it continues to conceive of the 'elements' and 'humours' as 'natural' agents separable from, if circulating among, a cultural apparatus.²³ Such criticism has done well to theorize the ways that the realm of the social and cultural is interpenetrated by 'nature.' But I would argue we need to take this insight still a step further by dispensing with the dichotomy altogether, by collapsing the divide of nature and culture that implicitly continues to inform this scholarship.²⁴ I attempt to move us in this direction by emphasizing how natural and cultural forms work in tandem, demonstrating how a range of political meanings saturate nature's 'purest,' most elemental configurations. Guided as we are by modern categories of thought, it is easy to construe physical elements like hot, wet, cold, or dry; or bodily substances like animal spirits and humours; or natural bodies like fruits and vegetables, which so interest Ligon, to be at a far remove from the hand of 'culture.' But, in fact, even in these contexts we are steeped in its principles, always already 'inside' early modern culture. Such concepts are fully saturated with political meanings, not at all pre-discursive or pre-cultural in the way that a modern division of nature from culture will seek to instate them.²⁵ Rather the two terms blend into a single concept for the early moderns, embodying a word that Latour relishes: a 'cosmopolitics.'²⁶ Insofar as the word captures the twinning of terms and categories that will only later undergo rupture, it expresses the early modern social formation, which was fully authorized by nature. As such, our reading practice needs to acknowledge that nature's body, like the human body and the body politic, were metaphors for each other, each realm standing in mimetic relation to the others.

In this chapter I will suggest some of the ways that details of a world we as moderns, would designate as 'natural' – specifically, Ligon's description of Barbadian nature – can act 'cosmopolitically' to provide a sort of scaffolding for social identity under the pressures of transplantation. It makes perfect sense that Ligon would look to Barbadian nature to gauge the island's suitability for English settlers. For, in the absence of a distinction between the realms of the 'natural' and the 'cultural,' the possibility that unfamiliar 'natural' configurations – like England's new

acquired colony in the West Indies – can reconfigure culture becomes a charged concern. We have seen such concerns become apparent in previous chapters, and we have observed the range of strategies that Ligon's contemporaries invoked to guard against the degenerative slide that some assumed would begin with transplantation. What distinguishes Ligon is his tendency to approach this problem from the other angle, construing the transportability of human culture through the lens of the natural world.²⁷ There he finds confirmation that there is little reason to worry about the problem of degeneration in the context of Barbados, since the social forms valued by English culture are already writ large in her verdant landscape.

A Short History of Genre

If my last chapter observed how tragicomedy attempted to project and resolve obstacles to transplanting English communities abroad by envisioning the tempering force of the upper ranks, and especially gentlewomen, the first sustained account of English settlement in the West Indies took a different generic form: that of a history of nature. The title of Ligon's text announces itself more broadly as a 'true and exact history,' positioning itself within what seems to be the wider frame of a general 'history' and directing us to what may seem to be a narrative about the island's civil affairs from the time of English settlement, twenty years prior to Ligon's arrival to the island.²⁸ But it quickly becomes apparent that what Ligon means by 'history' is a history that will include and even emphasize Barbados's *natural* properties – the island's topography, climate, plants, and animals – alongside and in relation to its civil history, the island's social, political, and economic structures. We may wonder at his choice of title – especially the omission of the qualifier 'Natural' to modify 'History' – in a work that announces an interest in the '*Principal Trees and Plants*' of the island on the title page. But this omission, I suggest, is the generic residue of ways of thinking that hold the early modern apart from the modern. It expresses, that is, a distinctively early modern way of organizing the world as well as knowledge of that world. Ligon was hardly alone in making this choice, as it was a dominant practice in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Indeed, the term of choice for those writing natural histories in the sixteenth and much of the seventeenth centuries was simply 'history,' a tendency we can observe as early as 1541 in Conrad Gessner's influential *Historia plantarum et vires* or his later *History of Animals* (1555). The Eng-

lish translation of José de Acosta's account of New Spain extends this pattern in yoking terms and conceptual categories that *we* might perceive as distinct in being titled *A Naturall and Moral History of the West Indies*. Implicit in the title is the idea that nature's works no less than the works of man can impart knowledge of a 'moral' nature, a conviction that is further conveyed by Acosta's clustering of sociological and ethnographic information together with botanical, geographical, and climatological data.²⁹ Philemon Holland's popular English translation of Pliny, which appeared in editions of 1601, 1634, and 1635 – indicating renewed interest in the genre just prior to Ligon's journey to Barbados – insisted on the same set of conjunctions in calling itself *The historie of the world: commonly called, the naturall historie of C. Plinius Secundus*. The double title is instructive: it implies an identity between a 'historie of the world' and a 'naturall historie,' suggesting that nature encompasses the world, in all its political, moral, social, cultural, and naturalistic forms.

This tendency to effortlessly mix 'the subject matters of "nature" and "man"' was shared by countless other writers of this period, including Camden, Harriot, and Bacon. It also underpinned a range of disciplines including chorography, historiography, and cosmography, as Barbara Shapiro has demonstrated in research investigating the origins of probability and certainty.³⁰ Shapiro suggests that writers of the seventeenth century were not inclined to draw a sharp line between 'scientific and humanistic studies,' and that the practitioners of both history and natural history shared not only a common culture but also a common approach to the problem of knowledge and the appropriate means of gaining that knowledge.³¹ These insights have been confirmed by more recent work on *historia*, in which this mode of enquiry has been characterized as 'a key epistemic tool of early modern intellectual practices,' one that 'straddled the distinction between human and natural subjects, embracing accounts of objects in the natural world as well as the record of human action.' Not just a genre but a cognitive category, *historia* 'seriously challenges our assumptions about nature and culture as separate fields of inquiry,' denoting a significant break with the two-cultures world that supersedes it.³² These studies convincingly demonstrate that the project of writing 'history' had not yet been divided along the axis of human and natural, as it will eventually come to be.

In fact, according to Brian Ogilvie, a historian of early modern botany, this cultural shift would not be fully consolidated until the middle of the eighteenth century, when 'natural history' would become the genre of choice for that which does *not* encompass histories of man.³³ We see

this shift well in progress – but still incomplete – at the start of the eighteenth century in a text heavily indebted to Ligon's history, an account of the many islands of the West Indies by Sir Hans Sloane. The title he selects is revealing, in that he calls it *A Voyage to the Islands of Madeira, Barbados, Nieves, St. Christophers and Jamaica, with the Natural History of the herbs and trees, Four-footed beasts, Fishes, Birds, Insects, Reptiles &c Of the last of those Islands*. As with Ligon, the account begins with a journey and then expands into a more comprehensive account. But the differences are crucial too, as this text expresses a different conceptual apparatus from that evident in Ligon; notably, Sloane calls his account a 'Natural History,' as against Ligon's 'History.' Although we might be inclined to read this as a minor difference – expressing what may be mere personal preferences with regard to word choice – we should consider changes to textual content as well. For along with the narrowed title, Sloane's account expresses a more narrow definition of what counts for 'nature.' Notably, man – and the civil, cultural, political, and economic structures that surround him – is mostly missing from this text. The emphasis on 'social organization and local culture' so central to Ligon's capacious history is mostly absent here, reflecting a deep cultural shift.³⁴ Describing the generic changes visible in the eighteenth century as a kind of epistemic shift, Ogilvie argues that they be read as reflecting a fundamental reorganization of knowledge. It is a division, I would add, that crucially enables modern racial ideologies.

In the case of Ligon's account of Barbados, a range of textual details helps to clarify that his project of history writing will be achieved through close attention to the precise forms of natural objects alongside civil events. The extended title, for one thing, illustrates what it means by 'history' with reference to a landscape and its vegetation. Indeed, the title gives priority to the vegetative landmarks of Barbados – its '*Principal Trees and Plants*' – as against the artefacts of human culture, since the machine that produced sugar from cane – the Ingenio – appears in smaller typeface and at the bottom of the impacted title. But it is the dedicatory apparatus, specifically, a poem on the text written by Ligon's cousin, George Walshe, that identifies this text as participating in a quite precise genre of history writing. In this poem, Ligon is hailed as a modern-day Pliny, one whose descriptive taxonomies neither miss

Nor Heaven, Earth, Sea, nor ought that in them is.
Not a new Star can scape your Observation,
Nor the least Insect passe your Contemplation.

Walshe identifies classical models for this kind of work in the writings of Pythagoras and Ovid, whom Ligon resembles insofar as he attends to a diversity of embodied forms, from rational to vegetable. Indeed, at one point in the text, Ligon indicates that he is quite self-consciously structuring his narrative in accord with a natural philosopher's migration from one embodied form to another, structuring a transition from a section on the island's people and animals as a movement from the 'reasonable and sensitive Creatures of this island to say somewhat of the Vegetables, as of Trees' (66). Histories routinely made such connections, effortlessly moving between the spheres of culture and nature, in much the way Evelyn does in construing the 'king-pine' in parallel with Charles II. In titling his own tract a 'history' of Barbados, then, Ligon indicates his imbrication in an epistemology that yoked civil and natural, scientific and historical, poetic and factual.

As Walshe's introductory poem indicates, he may also have been quite self-consciously modelling his project on Holland's recent translations of Pliny, even attempting to update the classical catalogue with reference to England's newly acquired colonial possessions. In this effort, Ligon was hardly alone. The Spanish had been revising Pliny with reference to their colonial possessions for decades by the time Ligon came to write.³⁵ Nicolás Monardes's *Ioyfull newes out of the newe founde worlde* was 'Englished' in 1577 and appeared in subsequent editions in 1580 and 1596, alongside Acosta's *Naturall and Moral History of the East and West Indies*, which was translated into English in 1604. English authors had yet to stake their claim to this active market in histories of nature, although it may not have been due to a lack of interest. Paula Findlen has observed that scientists like Thomas Harriot and John White, who were involved in the earlier settlement of Virginia, had hoped to compile their observations of this land into a natural history but found their desires thwarted by political turmoil. The result was that no such 'history' ever materialized. Harriot's *briefe and true report of the new found land of Virginia* ... and White's accompanying drawings offered only a taste of what a more systematic history might have provided.³⁶ Years later, Francis Bacon would attempt to spur these limping efforts forward, urging the English to join with historians of other nations in compiling natural histories. The 1627 posthumous publication of *Sylva Sylvarum, or, A natural history, in ten centuries* was an attempt to begin such efforts and became a publishing hit, running through multiple editions all the way up to and beyond the period of the Restoration.³⁷ Elsewhere, particularly in his *Novum Organon*, Bacon encouraged others to extend his own incomplete effort 'in

the research and compilation of natural history,' urging that 'we must turn all our attention to seeking and noting the resemblances and analogies of things, both in wholes and in parts.'³⁸

Ligon seems to have viewed his work as an attempt to further such endeavours, often casting himself as a Baconian scientist. He explicitly refers to Bacon at one point in his *History* when he puzzles over the absence of springs despite the plenitude of Barbadian caves with moist air. He confesses: 'I had it in my thoughts, to make an Essay, what Sir Francis Bacons experiment solitarie, touching the making of Artificial Springs would do' (98). This tendency to rather self-consciously assume the mantle of a natural philosopher recurs in a number of places in the *History*, as when he speculates as to why, in travelling at sea, they have perfect visibility through the water only when the sea is rough, not calm. This puzzling observation reminds him of 'a point of Philosophy I had heard discours'd of, among the Learned; That in the Air, Rough hard bodies, meeting with one another, by violent stroaks, Rarified the Air, so as to make fire' (7). He commends similar efforts in a slave named Macow, whom he describes as conducting a basic 'experiment' (49) in connecting varying lengths of timber in order to replicate the musical sounds of Ligon's theorbo. The wonder that the incident evokes for Ligon – his surprise that one 'without teaching [could] do so much' – leads him to conclude that 'these people are capable of learning Arts' (49). He himself was well supported in such enterprises by a circle of friends and patrons who promoted his own scientific enquiries. He had been involved in an effort to drain the fens of East Anglia at the urging of Sir William Killigrew, a project that disastrously backfired when inhabitants revolted against the enclosure, ruining him financially and priming him for his overseas trip to Barbados.³⁹ Moreover, we learn from his dedicatory apparatus that the Lord Bishop of Salisbury, Brian Duppa, urged him to publish on the topic of Barbados and was likely the financial support behind the enterprise, since Ligon completed the history while in debtor's prison. This was the same Duppa, tutor to Charles I, who was patronized by Archbishop William Laud, indicating Ligon's connections to a group of divines whose religio-political insights gained expression in art through histories of nature.⁴⁰

Far from being an exclusive treatment of the 'natural world,' as writing about objects of the natural world would increasingly be framed, in Ligon's moment the genre of *historia* enjoyed very flexible parameters. It allowed him access to a range of genres – scientific no less than poetic – pursuit of his truth claims. Critics have sensed this openness of form

in the range of classifications they have tended to assign the text. Some have associated it with 'travel literature,'⁴¹ while others have argued for its affinities with the 'domestic manual' or with the more political focus of a 'plantation manual.'⁴² Still others identify the text with the sentimental literature that developed around the story of Inkle and Yarico, since the originary account of this Indian woman – Yarico – who would save and then be betrayed by an Englishman, first appeared in Ligon's text.⁴³ But the text is also organized, as I have suggested, by the governing categories of natural philosophy, in explicating rational, sensitive, and vegetative bodies. As these competing narrative strands suggest, the 'True and Exact' claims of the title had not yet congealed into a later form of scientific representation, which would promote the use of a transparent kind of language to avoid what it would perceive to be the distortions of 'romancical' discourse.⁴⁴ Ligon's 'history,' by contrast, includes not only the genres enumerated above but elements of pastoral, Petrarchan lyric, and epic romance, which work in tandem with the text's content to advance its meaning. I will turn now to explicating how these generic overlays work in tandem with the conceptual overlays between culture and nature to argue for the text's embeddedness in a pre-modern system of identity, where the difference of race – what early moderns also referred to as a difference 'of kind' – was a difference of degree.

Romance, Errancy, and Degeneracy

If Ligon's emphasis on the bounty and natural beauty of Barbados might lead us to believe that he welcomed the prospect of planting in the Indies, in fact, the text explicitly confounds this narrative. His emphasis – in form and content – is on the rupture of the Civil War, which he blames for transforming him, a royalist, into a 'stranger' at home. Eager to be transported to 'any other part of the World, how far distant soever, rather than abide [in England]' (1), Ligon accepted a friend's bid to join him in planting a new colony in 1647. He thereby substituted storms at sea for the social storm at home, and a previously settled Ligon ends up being transformed into a wanderer and vagabond on the 'Raging Seas.' If tropes of romance come to describe his own predicament, so they serve to frame his narrative. Attempting to 'place' the text in the opening letter to Duppa, Ligon refers to his text as a 'wild Grottesco' and a 'loose extravagant Drolorie,' invoking the quintessential figures of romance – mixture, hybridity, and vagrancy – to suggest his and England's ontological status of being 'out of place.'⁴⁵ Returning form and

order to their shapeless condition is the unstated goal that this opening identifies. If his aimless errand initially gains expression in a narrative that wanders into a forest of pleasurable digressions, both he and the narrative will discover a principle of order in the book of nature, which provides a blueprint for stability, both social and narratological.

Just as the text's formal features define Ligon's unplanned trip as a kind of errancy, this concern informs Ligon's view of the creatures he observes at sea, who seem to stray beyond the contexts that normally define them. As he sets sail for what he believes will be a plantation in Antigua after a brief stop in Barbados (21), he observes versions of his own hardships in the life forms he sees. Emblems of displacement – of animals wandering at a remove from their native element – crowd his account. Predators force dolphins from their 'watry Element,' and a change of locale transforms the shark – 'Tyrants' of the seas – to impotence (5). In Ligon's optic, all living forms express attachment to a milieu, and are rendered vulnerable when this bond is disrupted, human no less than animal and vegetable. As such, transplantation is the problem that has been thrust upon Ligon and that the narrative will seek to overcome. If it is a problem produced by fraught political relations, however, he discovers his response to it in the natural forms that surround him. At sea, for instance, Ligon becomes captivated by a species of fish, the 'Carvil,' and a kind of bird that comfortably occupies more than one realm, defying any singular or exclusive attachment to place. He marvels at the bird's ability to thrive equally on land and water, such that he wonders if the 'sea may not be counted their natural home' (4), and he touts the fish's ability to transform itself into a sailing vessel, as he 'Raises up his Main mast, spreads his sails ... and begins his voyage' (6). Transforming the purposeless wandering of his early journey into a wilful and effortless ability to move between places, as he observes these animals have effected, is the goal he increasingly moves toward.

Indeed, this quality of portability assumes greater significance much later in his narrative, when he provides an account of his stay in Barbados. In the catalogue of life forms that structure his observations of the island, Ligon singles out the sugar cane plant for being the island's one non-native vegetable, describing it as having been 'brought thither as a stranger, from beyond the Line' (85). As a transplanted species, the sugar cane models in vegetable form what Ligon seeks to reproduce for English culture. Though he is quick to concede that the plant lacks the royal properties visible in the king-pine or royal palmetto, he praises it for making up in ingenuity what it lacks in rank. He esteems it for being

a steward, guardian, and husband, one whose 'special preheminance' is the ability 'to preserve all the rest from corruption' (85). In language that construes the sugar cane plant as an overseer of an active estate, he describes it as 'a strong and lusty Plant, and so vigorous, as where it grew, to forbid all Weeds to grow very neer it,' thereby maintaining 'its own health and gallantry' (87). The plant, then, instates in nature the distinctions of rank that Ligon seeks to secure for English settlers, both those already living abroad in Barbados and those contemplating such movements in the future. If transplantation – and the spectre of errancy that it evokes – is the problem to be overcome for Ligon, the 'gallant' sugar cane shows him the way by keeping a steady course of growth amid the assaults of enemies, and by extending this principle of constancy to other plants through its role as a preservative.

But even as animal and vegetable bodies hold principles of order that can guide English settlers, these life forms are also impeded in ways that will resonate for the project of translating English culture abroad: all face the problem of how to sustain their natural difference, their distinction, from other forms within their group. While the sugar cane, for one, has the potential to serve as an orderly husband, it is also vulnerable to the levelling energies of another growth – the withs – a weed Ligon discusses at length. Defying classification – being neither a tree nor a plant – withs also stand against relations of rank, as conveyed in the vegetable world through properties of height. Withs bring the high low, and undo the fruitful potential of other plants. For Ligon, they signify the principle of indistinct growth, decimating cane, garden, and orchard alike, by their ability to 'creep into every place, and as they go pull down all' (97). Though a creeping plant, he regrets that they do not stay in their place, preferring instead to 'mount to the tops of the Trees, which are for the most part, eighty or 100 foot high' (97). The same threat carries over to the world of human activities, of human culture, which can, at any moment, fall into oblivion. For Ligon, as for his contemporaries, movement beyond England triggers fears of losing one's status, that is, of losing the distinctions that defined one's rank, degree, and place within an English social body. To represent the potential for this cultural outcome – the decline of degeneracy – Ligon develops the theme of wandering that opened his narrative into a full-fledged romance. This is the genre that most forcefully defines his account of their brief stay on the Cape Verde islands, which is figured as a space of moral errancy, one that literally delays their arrival to Barbados and that symbolically confounds crucial principles of order underpinning Ligon's sense of the world as

a carefully calibrated hierarchy of life forms.⁴⁶ It is on this island that Ligon constructs a perfect vignette of what it means to stray from social distinction in the figure of the Portuguese master who is the governor of the island of St Iago.⁴⁷

We can see this narrative of self-forgetting take shape when Ligon describes his first sighting of the Portuguese island of St Iago. The island's natural forms identify its social failings. Viewing it from afar, the island appears as a kind of unbroken continuum to the English shipmen, one where rock, hill, and barren soil blend together. We soon learn that the island has the potential for fecundity, since they have arrived during the blighting season of tornadoes, but that its fruitful potential is not cultivated by its Portuguese overseers. The problem attributed to nature is, in fact, a political problem, one positioned as the failing of the island's ruler. A man whom Ligon analogizes to the 'Knight of the Sun' (10), the Governor is an 'errant' knight for undermining his own rule in regarding so lightly principles of social hierarchy. By applying such hyperbolic language to the governor – a reference to the protagonist of a sixteenth-century Spanish romance translated as *Mirror of Princes and Knights, in which Are Told the Immortal Deeds of the Knight of the Sun and of His Brother Roxicler, Sons of the Great Emperor Trabacio*⁴⁸ – Ligon uses a genre associated with Spain and Portugal – chivalric romance – to parody the failure of heroism on the island, the failure of the very principles of rank and blood that underpin the ideology of heroic chivalry. Notably, the governor appears sheepish, refusing to impress his authority over those whom he rules in choosing to live hermit-like in a modest home buried within a hill overlooking a parched landscape. This failure has already been forecast in the earlier description of the island's nondescript landscape, as the political arrangement is a version of the land's natural forms in Ligon's optic; neither has been cared for in a way that might foster civility and distinction. This failure of political rule is expressed in the Governor's domestic arrangements as well, for he has sired 'a *Mollotto*' (9), presumably with one of his 'negroes,' violating the very basic distinction between master and servant in the process. Ligon humorously underscores the social inversions this man embodies in recounting the Governor's arrival to host the English for dinner. The event reads again as an absolute parody of heroic chivalry, as the Governor violently races in atop an aggressive barb, whose 'swiftness of motion' (11) nearly kills him, leaving him in a great trance. In describing the Padre as 'subject to the will of his horse' (10), Ligon translates the episode still further as emblematic of the world turned upside down: the vignette portrays

horse ruling man, passion guiding reason, and the high being brought low.⁴⁹ From his ill-constructed house, to his unadorned walls, to his habit of serving instead of being served, this governor fails in not holding himself apart, not honouring the distinction that his social role as governor should entail.

In recounting his indecorous treatment of his beautiful black mistress, Ligon completes the vignette. Critics often pause over the passage where Ligon describes this woman as 'A *Negro* of the greatest beauty and majesty together' (12), construing the episode as displaying Ligon's voyeuristic desire for the African woman, a species of the pornographic desire he will express when describing the scantily clad bodies of African slave women in Barbados.⁵⁰ His emphasis on her graceful carriage and majestic demeanour do indeed seem to suggest Ligon's admiration of, if not desire for, the woman. But I would argue that his desire grasps at the social distinction he believes she confers. Notably, he is the servant to her 'royal' will, positioning himself as a client of this regal patroness. As such, he offers her 'Trifles ... worn by the great Queens of *Europe*,' which he admits are 'not worthy her acceptance.' And he describes her reward of a beautiful smile as requiring a 'far greater present' than the 'rich silver, silk, and gold Ribbon' he has offered her (12–13). As such, he indicates that his service has been reciprocated through the distribution of a royal reward, one that promises still more favours in the future. This tendency to associate her with courtly codes is visible in every detail of this two-page account of the mistress. In fact, he goes so far as to describe her as a woman of 'far greater Majesty and gracefulness' than he has observed of Queen Anne at court, even when seated in a 'Chair of State,' accompanied by a 'Baron of *England*,' and dancing a measure at the end of a 'Masque in the Banqueting house.' This outrageous comparison complexly embeds Ligon's social desires. Not only does it serve to emphasize his social proximity to the court, but it may hint at thwarted ambitions at home, intimating that the rewards to be found on the islands will far exceed those distributed at home. He emphasizes the extent of such benefits in his description of this mistress's body. Though forced to hold court in the debased context of the Governor's mean lodgings, the Cape Verdean mistress yet conveys her social pre-eminence in the exquisite garments she wears. Recalling with meticulous detail events of years earlier, Ligon describes her garments as if she were standing before him still, recalling her 'green Taffaty' head roll; a 'vayle'; a 'Peticcoat of Orange Tawny and Sky colour'; a mantle of 'purple silk' adorned with a

'rich Jewel'; as well as 'Silk' buskins, shoes of 'white Leather,' and jewels to adorn her ears, arms, and neck (12).

Indeed, the language of courtly compliment that he here leans so heavily on suggests a quite different reading of the mistress than has been offered by critics to date, one that gains significance when positioned within the larger narrative arc linking St Iago to Barbados. In the context of the embedded narrative of Portuguese (mis-)rule that I have thus far traced, clearly her majesty and courtliness serve to set off the failings of the Portuguese Governor. Here she quite clearly embodies the principles of decorousness that he neglects, not least insofar as he denies her a devoted train of followers due 'such a state and beauty,' an omission that allows Ligon ready access to her (13). Where she is a model of the order he associates with courtly life, the Governor emblemizes the disorder of lapsed gentility. He has allowed himself to become indistinct, 'discomposed' in word and gesture, as we have already learned from his barbed entry (10).

But there is a larger narrative arc to be traced in and through his representation of this regal African woman, one that is prefigured in the text's introductory poem. In this context Walshe describes how Ligon has drawn a

Landscape in rich Tapestry

Attireing all in such a lovely Dresse,
Rich, Genuine, and full of Courtlinesse:
That as Great Brittain sometimes I have seen,
So you've Barbadoes drawn just like a Queen.

Like the courtly mistress Ligon introduces us to in the opening pages of his text – richly attired, courtly in manner, and queenly in essence – Walshe fashions Barbados, as had been customary for Britain, in the figure of a Queen. He offers, that is, an allegorical representation of both lands, linking them by figuring each through a powerful emblem of royal order – the figure of the queen's body.⁵¹ If we interpret the mistress in a similarly allegorical way, she comes to signify beyond her status as an individual whom Ligon has happened to encounter on his journey, taking on greater significance as an emblem of the island's 'naturally' royal properties. Ligon seems to press this sort of reading in what appears to be his reckless decision to compare the mistress to Queen Anne, and

in the still more hyperbolic reading of her body in terms of 'Neptunes Court' (13). In making such comparisons, Ligon encourages us to read this woman typologically, as a symbol of all that these islands might be, were they afforded the care of a stewardly 'husband' rather than the neglect of a jealous 'Padre.'⁵²

Indeed, this trope of the regal feminine figure recurs in his narrative, characterizing his visits to *both* islands, as registered not only in the people he encounters but the natural forms he records. Immediately following the episode with the mistress, its main themes are underscored when he encounters at a nearby fountain beautiful black twins, whom he greets with a charged amorous discourse. He falters for words to describe their beauty, noting 'To express all the perfections of Nature, and Parts, these Virgins were owners of, would ask a more skilful pen, or pencil than mine' (15). As with the majestic mistress, these 'Negro Virgins' (15) seem to signify beyond their individual identities by virtue of the hyperbolic language he uses to describe them. It hardly seems incidental, for instance, that they are adorned with elements of the island's resources, their hair plaited with 'rare flowers that grow there,' their arms with 'pearls, and blew bugle' (16). Ligon tells us they are 'Wanton, as the soyl that bred them, sweet as the fruits they fed on' (16), making their emblematic significance explicit. As such, they are walking embodiments of the luscious landscape, figures of the soil's fertility. But what is equally crucial to observe of these virgins is their status as being unmanned in this 'valley of pleasure' (15). Serving as a kind of analogue to Sir Walter Raleigh's famous description of Guiana as a country that 'hath yet her Maidenhead,' these virgins function within the narrative to stoke the desires of English gentlemen at home.⁵³ Like the mistress improperly 'husbanded' by the Portuguese Governor, these twins beckon with the promise of satisfying desire, rewards that they are eager to bestow, insofar as they 'counsel and perswade our loves ... and so commit rapes upon our affections' (17). In a compelling inversion of Raleigh's image of an enforcing male conqueror, Ligon imagines himself as a taken husband, one who has been forced into manning these feminine 'Paragons' (17).

The extent to which the episode values natural gentility as a social principle of far greater importance than skin colour emerges when we compare it to another account of rape mentioned in passing in this same Cape Verdean vignette. Ligon records how one afternoon during their stay aboard the ship off the coast of the island, a group of 'passengers' sought to go ashore to have their linen washed. They brought 'divers women' from the ship to perform the necessary labour, women whom

Ligon describes with disdain as having been 'taken from *Bridewel*, *Turnball* street, and such like places of education.' While attempting to complete their work, he reports how 'the *Portugals*, and *Negroes* too, found them handsome and fit for their turns, and were a little Rude.' He implies they were raped, although Ligon confesses 'I cannot say Ravish'd' as the women's labouring status precludes them in his view from being able to 'suffer such violence' (13). Perhaps still more shockingly, when the English gentlemen depart from the ship the next day to explore the reported beauty of the place, completely unaffected by the 'complaints' of rape and pillage on the part of the 'passengers,' a Portuguese captain assumes they are eager to revenge their women and requests that they return their arms to the ship. Ligon and the other men, including Colonel Modiford, are quick to dispel this illusion, indicating in no uncertain terms their absolute indifference to the predicament of the common English women. Viewing the women – though presumably white and English – as removed in kind from themselves, they treat them as lacking any claim to self-propriety, whether sexual or material. The difference of their treatment at the hands of their higher-ranking countrymen as compared with Ligon's expressions of decorum in relation to the virgin negroes is striking. If dark of skin, even marked by a 'badge' as 'free *Negroes*' (16), the virgins yet bear claim to a form of social distinction emphatically valued by Ligon. It is their lavish garments that attest to this value – clothed as they are in the silks and gems that signify their social distance from the Englishwomen, whose commonness is given material expression in the plain linen with which they are associated.⁵⁴ If the predicament of the English women evokes not the least expression of concern from Ligon, even in the very public form of this published record of it, his account of the virgins evokes a kind of erotic rhapsody from him, one that he feels explained to justify alternately as an expression of his artistic leaning, his extended travels at sea, and the island's minimal entertainments. He concludes the vignette with an apology for this passion, for this 'spirit of love, a passion not to be govern'd,' what he refers to in the language of romance as his 'wild extravagancy' (17).

But the high spirits – expressed by high passion – that these young women, and their majestic counterpart in the Mistress, evoke is precisely what Ligon seeks to evidence in his record of these islands. He urges, in effect, that these lands can and will support English social distinction, insofar as they 'naturally' evoke the pastimes of love, painting, architecture, and banqueting that he associates with a courtly readership and that he has evoked in his interactions with the island's beauties.⁵⁵ His

apology for his outburst, then, registers as contrived, rather than sincere. In fact, we will hear the same voice much later in the text, when he describes the trees that populate the Barbadian landscape. Here we can more readily perceive how his description functions as a literary *topos*, since Ligon waxes lyrical in this later episode over his love not for a woman but for the royal palmetto tree (see fig. 4). He tells us that 'I believe there is not a more Royal or Magnificent tree growing on the earth, for beauty and largeness, not to be parallell'd ... as if you had ever seen her, you could not but have fallen in love with her' (75). He sings her praises across four pages. And it is notable that he commends her for the same qualities he admired in the Cape Verdean women, observing that the tree perfectly embodies the 'soyle that bred her' and is so 'chast' as to be a superior model for Vitruvius's column than the courtesans after whom the architect had modelled his more '[lascivious]' columns (78). As in the earlier episode with the virgins, the reverie concludes with an apology for '[tir'ing] you' and he agrees to 'give over' (79). A modern epistemology tells us to separate these episodes as quite different events, with the effect that critics copiously analyse the earlier episode depicting the mistress and virgins and yet quietly pass over the latter discussing the palmetto tree. But if we take seriously what the dictates of *historia* as a genre tell us, then these narratives really serve as versions of each other, the one recording in the world of people what the other records in the world of plants.

Indeed, both vignettes connect in central ways with the larger aims of his narrative. I suggest that they figure in the register of amorous discourse what the history evidences elsewhere in the discursive mode of natural philosophy: that the islands 'under the line' (107), given proper stewardship, do not confound but rather preserve distinctions of rank crucial to English conceptions of identity. Nowhere else, Ligon tells us – and by this we must understand 'not even in England' – is majesty so beautifully set off as in these tropical islands. Not even Queen Anne can rival the regality of this island's mistress. The Portuguese Governor is, of course, blind to these majestic forms, and stands against principles of stewardship. But Ligon – and the English gentlemen whose optic he embodies – are positioned by the text as the islands' proper stewards, those who can and will actualize this potential. In moving from a tone of farcical romance while in the Padre's abode to a Petrarchan discourse and a pastoral rhapsody in discussing the island's regal women, he indicates the range of outcomes that the island holds. He celebrates the fact that the island need not be a site of indistinction, such as the Padre has

Palmeto Royall

Figure 4. Engraving of the 'Yonge Palmetto Royall' from Richard Ligon, *A True & Exact History of the Island of Barbados* (London, 1657), page 76. Courtesy of the John Carter Brown Library at Brown University.

made it, since emblems of rank and regality are everywhere visible to the well-trained eye. Far from being a racist fantasy, then, his account of the mistress and her youthful counterparts serves to allegorize the observation that rank inheres – or *can* inhere – in these islands. And Cape Verde holds the lessons that he urges a proper ruling class to heed in Barbados.

The Order of Nature

It should hardly come as a surprise, then, to find that when Ligon approaches the English settlement of Barbados, the natural landscape is a perfect expression of all that was lacking in the Portuguese settlement. From its first sighting, the land embodies the principle of rank, and the notions of obedience, reciprocity, and mutuality that such a system ideally instates. Not incidentally, the first thing his eye perceives are the 'high large and lofty trees, with their spreading branches and flourishing tops' (20), which he describes as protecting and in turn being replenished by the earth beneath them. A classic symbol of the monarch's protective function in relation to his subjects, the botanical dyad indicates how 'bounty and goodness in the one' is returned with 'gratefulness in the other' (10). Ligon pauses in this moment to conclude that 'truly these Vegetatives may teach both the sensible and reasonable creatures, what it is that makes up wealth, beauty, and all harmony in that Leviathan, a well govern'd Common-wealth,' gesturing at the 'woeful experience of these times we live in' (21). His history of Barbados, then, invites us to consider this landscape as a place that will restore the principles of rank and regality that have begun to wither in England. The natural features of Barbados suggest the possibility of a different outcome. Here, the land's emblem of royalty – the royal palmetto – is described as 'crown'd with' a great head and bearing great 'weight' (76), evoking the struggles of England's own former monarch, but as also benefiting from a kind of natural stewardship in the land. In Barbados the soil honours royalty, providing the regal tree with a sustaining network of roots to prevent it from being 'blown down' (78), unlike its English counterpart.

Moreover, it is here in Barbados that a narrative on the brink of 'forgetting itself,' in emulating the Portuguese-like acts of dilation and wandering, is called back to its English origin.⁵⁶ Indeed, in the inscriptions of rank that Ligon perceives everywhere in this natural landscape, he discovers a principle of order that will hold his narrative, and, by implication, the English he seeks to translate abroad, in place. It is the principle

of hierarchy, so lavishly on display amid Barbados's natural forms, that enables Ligon to find his footing. Taking his cue from natural philosophy, he organizes his account by clustering material into segments categorized according to the reasonable, sensitive, and vegetable life forms, beginning 'at the top,' with man, and moving downward, concluding with a discussion of the island's plant life. Within each cluster, he varies this method, sometimes beginning with the lowest form and proceeding, incrementally, up a scale of value to the most noble form, and other times beginning with what he considers the greatest form and proceeding down a scale of value. In all cases, precise rankings – as conveyed through terms like 'greater' and 'lesser,' 'noble' and 'base' – govern his groupings. When he speaks of trees, for instance, he begins with the most depraved kind among them, proceeding from the poisonous species, to those that bear 'contemptible fruits' (69), on up to those producing edible fruit, until he eventually works his way up the ranks to the royal palmetto, which he describes as the most magnificent tree on earth. When his topic is animals, by contrast, he begins with the 'largest' (58) beasts, proceeds to 'lesser Animals' (61), and concludes with 'moving little Animals' (63) – what he elsewhere describes through the term 'multitudes' (63) – such as ants and crabs. Across the island's various life forms, Ligon discovers order in the hierarchies of rank that 'naturally' organize relations between one creature, one plant and the next.

So, too, Ligon's method of 'classifying' the people who inhabit the island reflects this tendency to position groups within a graduated hierarchy, expressing an assessment of human difference quite distinct from modern racial ideologies. Most notably, he demarcates three 'kinds' of people on the island – master, servant, and slave – rather than conceiving of the groups as locked into an opposition. Although we might expect Ligon to place considerable stress on the difference of skin colour, since he writes at a time when chattel slavery was just beginning to take hold in this English colony, in fact I propose that he leans on a more labile language of physical difference, suggesting that racial ideologies rooted in skin colour would become consolidated *after* slavery had been implemented as an economic institution, rather than at its inception.⁵⁷ Since Ligon lived in Barbados for nearly three years during the crucial decade in which the colony shifted to large-scale sugar production and the dependence on slavery that accompanied it, his text is a key source for assessing these debates. And yet, what he does *not* say is sometimes as revealing as what he does. Significantly, he never once refers to English settlers by reference to their skin colour, although critics will often pre-

sume that he construes the English settlers and servants collectively as 'whites.' Although he is, of course, aware of differences of colour, typically referring to African slaves as 'negroes' and even admiringly describing the Indians' 'excellent ... colour' of 'bright bay' (54), when he comes to the Christian settlers – who were of English, but also Scottish and Irish, origin – he does not collectivize them as 'whites.' Instead, he clusters settlers and servants according to religion, place of origin, and, importantly, rank or social location. Hence, the adjective he most frequently uses in association with the servants is 'Christian.'

Indeed, rather than aligning the servants with their masters on the basis of white skin, Ligon tends instead to position them in relation to the African and Indian slaves among whom they lived and worked. The logic of rank, that is, serves to conjoin groups that modern racial ideologies seek to define as ontologically distinct, as occupying either side of an opposition. We see these associations bubble to the surface in Ligon's indeterminate and imprecise handling of the distinctions governing the categories of servant and slave. For him, the two terms are often used interchangeably. On more than one occasion, for instance, he collapses the distinction by referring to slaves as 'servants,' cautioning that they are 'Very good servants, if they be not spoyled by the *English*' (44).⁵⁸ Conversely, what he emphasizes about servants – both their abuse at the hands of cruel masters and their tendency toward insurrection – resonates with the details of slave life on the island. Indeed, in one particularly powerful anecdote, he describes how a planter who needed a servant offered to trade his own hog for a servant woman belonging to his neighbour. He went on to propose that the two – both woman and sow – be measured on a scale, with 'the price ... set [at] a groat a pound for the hogs flesh, and six-pence for the Womans flesh.' Ligon records the event for the 'humour it produces when the man discovers how much the fat servant outweighs his sow, leading him to retract his offer. But Ligon lingers on the episode to inform his reader that such transactions are 'an ordinary thing there,' where it is commonplace to 'sell ... servants to one another for the time they have to serve; and in exchange, receive any commodities that are in the Island' (59). He thereby identifies trade in flesh – servant and slave, human and animal – as the norm of planter culture, and points to the considerable overlap between servant and slave that structured relations in the colony. If there is a problem for Ligon, it is that neither group – slave or servant – is extended the protection that a paternalistic ethos – such as was the ideal in England – took for granted in delineating the reciprocal nature of the bond between master

and servant.⁵⁹ As servants, he sees both groups on the island – Christian servants and negro slaves – as entitled to a greater degree of protection at the hands of their masters.

Indeed, Ligon confounds our expectations about the island's logic of difference when, using the same narrative principle of an ascending or descending hierarchy that he used to organize his discussion of plant and animal life, he locates the human groups on a hierarchical continuum. Strikingly, he orders his discussion by beginning not with the slaves, as we might expect, but with an account of servants, only then proceeding to discuss conditions for the slaves, and finally concluding with a discussion of the master. That he seems to equate life 'at the bottom' of the human hierarchy with the island's indentured servants, rather than with its slave population, provides some indication of the indeterminacy of the category of slave at this transitional moment, and his tendency to regard both groups under a broader category of servant. It may also be an indirect way for Ligon to underscore his outrage upon finding that 'Christian servants' are typically regarded as the settlers' most expendable possessions, their flesh hardly regarded as worth the cost required to sustain it.⁶⁰ In fact, he notes the degradation of their condition by observing that 'The slaves and their posterity, being subject to their Masters for ever, are kept and preserv'd with greater care than the servants, who are theirs but for five years ... So that for the time, the servants have the worser lives, for they are put to very hard labour, ill lodging, and their dyet very sleight' (43).⁶¹

If Ligon comes down on this tendency to define servants and slaves as expendable flesh – as the planter's living possessions – it was because he perceived planters in Barbados to be actively violating natural principles of difference that ordered the world. Rank, after all, was a principle of English social relations precisely because it was perceived to naturally inhere in the flesh of those it described. If, then, Ligon does not yet construe the island's inhabitants in oppositional relations structured by the difference of skin colour, this is not to say that he had no language for translating the social categories of master and servant, royal and base into physiological terms. Indeed, I suggest that he had a more nuanced system of difference, one supporting a greater range of gradations, as compared with the rigid language of black and white that would soon become hegemonic in planter and English culture alike. It is also, significantly, a physiological term with close connections to discourses of blood. What his text leans on repeatedly and consistently to name differences of this nature – to name an early modern difference of kind

– is the language of spirits, a central physiological concept for the seventeenth century that was associated with animating in varying degrees and with diverse material effects the flesh of plants, animals, and people.

A shorthand for the 'animal spirits' that Francis Bacon would identify as the principle of life connecting all embodied forms, these physical agents were perceived to be the site of exchange between the material body and the immaterial soul. Offering a detailed description of their animated processes in his *Novum Organon*, for instance, Bacon explains: 'For every tangible body on earth contains an invisible and intangible spirit; the body envelops and clothes it.'⁶² In conceiving of the body's elements in the e terms, Bacon was building on a long tradition that left its imprint on humanist thinkers, who had associated these airy substances with crucial physical processes in the body.⁶³ Sir Thomas Elyot, for instance, would describe spirits as 'a substance subtyll, styrynge the powers of the body to perfourme theyr operations,' and Marsilio Ficino would observe that 'between the body of the world that is tractable, fallen in fact from part of it, and its soul, whose nature is too distant from its body, spirit is everywhere present ... For such spirit is necessarily sought as a kind of middle, in which the divine soul is present in a thicker body and bestows life on what is inside.'⁶⁴

If spirits left a visible imprint on the works and philosophies of sixteenth-century humanist thought, their function became more pointed with the rise of natural philosophy in the seventeenth century. In his posthumous natural history *Sylva Sylvarum*, Bacon would use these physical agents to define the classificatory principles of his natural philosophy, crediting them with instating degrees of separation between inanimate and animate bodies, so that the latter were understood to possess spirits 'more or less, kindled and inflamed' than the former.⁶⁵ For Bacon, variations in the quality of spirits were the basis of crucial physiognomic differences, with some bodies possessing higher spirits, meaning spirits more refined by heat, and others yielding depressed or sluggish spirits in the absence of such heat. Scrutinizing the qualities of spirits in all bodies was a central tenet of the new natural histories he urged his followers to take up. To understand the transformation of a body, he explained, 'one must ask of every body how much spirit there is in it, and how much tangible essence; and of the spirit itself ask whether it is abundant and swelling, or weak and sparse; thinner or denser; tending to air or fire; sharp or sluggish; feeble or robust; advancing or retreating; broken or continuous; at home or at odds with the surrounding environment, etc.'⁶⁶ As his language attests, spirits were perceived to be a mobile and

lively substance, rarely stable or static. Indeed, their dependence on the blood as a vehicle of distribution throughout the body meant that they were particularly vulnerable to its fluctuations, absorbing its changes in response to diet, but also climate, through their sustained contact. Insofar as they were equated in this period with blood, viewed as blood's purest, most airy force, they assume a key place in the reorganization of blood's meanings that I trace in this book.

In fact, in these seemingly trivial bodily substances I read a major modification to identifications rooted in blood, particularly insofar as these physiological agents emphasize the fallibility of blood. If, as Bacon suggests, different bodies are naturally disposed to possess low or high spirits, his account of these substances also emphasizes that such differences are contingent, that they can be altered by physical pressures whether artificially induced by the hand of a natural philosopher or naturally induced by a changed environment. They are not invariable in the way I have argued an earlier emphasis on lineal attributes in the sixteenth century suggested they were. As such, they are the symptom of the epistemological rearrangement I have traced beginning with Spenser, consolidating his view that by practising temperance one can indeed *make* non-linear blood gentle. The rising cultural valuation of spirits emphasized that all blood, even high blood, needed to be *made* as such and could not simply be presumed. Spirits were by definition too mobile and mutable to support notions of blood as imparting a fixed difference. As Descartes would observe in *L'Homme*, 'whatever can cause any change in blood can also cause change in the spirits.'⁶⁷ If, then, spirits infused bodies with difference, such qualities were alterable.

A reader of Bacon himself, as I have already suggested, Ligon was very much a part of this moment, insofar as he leans heavily on the concept of spirits to explain the differences between the island's various groups – human no less than vegetable. Indeed, in using this concept as a constant touchstone in describing the island's inhabitants, Ligon may have been adhering closely to Bacon's suggestion that such information be an essential feature of all reformed natural histories. Heeding Bacon's call for greater attention to the varying physical manifestations of spirits, Ligon observes their animating presence in all life forms on the island. All living beings – from the weedy withs that threaten to pull down the sugar cane, to the rebellious servants and slaves who erupt in revolt, to the island's labour-wearied first planters – are seen by him as animated by 'spirits' that confer distinctive qualities on each body. Notably, man's spirits are not in principle different from those of animals and plants.

All flesh is infused with these spirits, allowing for various kinds of sympathetic crossovers between the species. Like them, plants and animals experience the vicissitudes of having variously high and low, turbulent and calm, exhausted and persevering spirits. The tenor of spirits in one body as against the next, that is, served as a barometer of difference to organize a group or species from within.

If this language of relative height suggests how spirits could be used to delimit 'natural' relations of rank, such differences are also understood as conditional, responding to acts of studied intervention. Indeed, in many cases their powers are predicated on various forms of cultivation. Hence, Ligon recommends constant attention and vigilance on the part of settlers to keep the spirits of the many bodies they were 'overseeing' properly ordered. In the case of a plant like ginger, Ligon instructs future settlers in stilling its restless spirit, recommending that the skin be scraped off 'to kill the spirit,' so as to prevent it from perpetually growing (79). Similarly, he describes the island's potatoe, used to make 'Mobbie,' as having such potent spirits that they need to be soaked in water until 'the water has drawn and suckt out all the spirit' (31). 'Good ordering,' a recurring phrase in the text, is all that is needed.⁶⁸ Indeed, Ligon's active interests in cookery, architecture, and husbandry during his stay on the island are linked through this desire to moderate the 'temper' or 'spirit' of all living forms – whether man, plant, or element – in the interests of maintaining a clear social hierarchy. Not only is he obsessed with finding the 'true temper' (42) of Barbadian bricks so that they will not crack, but he carefully considers how homesteads might be redesigned to prevent settlers from having their spirits sapped by excessive heat. St Iago had no such principles of order, leaving the visiting English gentlemen 'scald[ed] without' by the sun and 'scalded within' by the exertion required to climb to the Padre's inaccessible house. As a result, as Ligon memorably describes, he and the other English gentlemen were 'in fitter condition to be fricased for the *Padres* dinner, than to eat any dinner our selves' (10). The depletion of their high spirits, in Ligon's account, transformed each of them into 'a dish of flesh' (11) fit for the table. What this event and Ligon's discussion of spirits reveal at large, is that if spirits express differences of rank that 'naturally' inhere across a spectrum of bodies, those differences are not understood to be eternal, unchangeable, and unmovable. Rather, they require the support of the will and careful acts of ordering on the part of the settlers, for their own good and for the good of those labouring on their behalf.

Even elite bodies can be radically renatured if care of these spirits is withheld.

Indeed, he is clear that ignoring these physical agents will explosively rebound upon the settlers. He tells us that such was the failing of the first round of planters, who endured too patiently a range of assaults on their embodied spirits. Living in windowless houses for fear of heavy rains, labouring too excessively, and feeding too slightly had the effect of 'depress[ing] their spirits ... to a declining and yielding condition' (41), a process of 'decay' that Ligon insists would grip even the 'best spirit of the world.' Arguing that they were not originally a 'mean' or 'lowly' group of settlers, their physical tribulations produced them as such. He identifies a similar predicament in the current settlers when he speculates that their 'distempers' are responsible for the 'killing ... disease' (21) that hit the island soon after his ship had arrived. He reasons that it is 'the ill dyet they keep' and their tendency to drink 'strong waters, [that] bring diseases upon themselves' (21), echoing Sir Henry Colt's warning to his son about the dangers of excessive consumption, discussed in chapter 4. By dragging their naturally high spirits down through such disregard, these planters have facilitated their own decline. Similarly, in demanding too much of their servants – both Christian and negro slaves – they repudiate natural differences of spirit. He repeatedly and openly speaks out against the standard treatment of indentured servants, pointing out that they are subjugated too forcefully. Observing their daily regimen closely, he recommends that they be given more meat, and objects to their having only one garment of clothing, since labouring in the sun so opens their pores that they are subject to a chill at night. Together such physical strains, he explains, 'exhaust the spirits of bodies unaccustomed to it' (45) and exacts a considerable cost of the settlers. For, like the cassava root, whose spirit carries an explosive force before it is drained, those servants 'whose spirits [are] not able to endure such slavery' (45) – though who have *higher* spirits than the settlers acknowledge – rebound in revolt, as has occurred just prior to his departure for England. Describing this 'combination amongst them' as a kind of human fire spreading from one spirit to another, Ligon heroizes their instinct for revenge, admiring the bond among men whose 'spirits [were] no way inferiour' one from the other (45–6). By subjugating them to a social level beneath that naturally instated by their spirits, the planters have invited this disaster upon themselves. He intimates that a hierarchy governed by incremental differences is to be preferred to one predicated on steep oppositions. His

view of the world – in its natural and social forms – as properly defined by gradations stands against the model of absolute subjugation preferred by many planters.

Even among the negro slaves, whom Ligon describes as afraid to revolt since their 'spirits are subjugated to so low a condition' (46), Ligon models a kind of behaviour that seeks to elicit the natural differences that inhere in the group. Susan Amussen has argued that Ligon, upon his arrival in Barbados, tends to homogenize the slaves, not regarding them as individuals, in the way he identified the Padre's black mistress as exceptionally majestic.⁶⁹ Yet, I read his narrative about Barbadian slaves as extending, rather than inverting, the kind of optic he displayed while in Cape Verde. We might notice, for instance, that his survey of this group is marked by brief anecdotes of individual slaves who demonstrate exceptional abilities: so we learn that one Macow has conducted curious experiments with music; how another slave named Sambo seeks the privileged knowledge he associates with Christianity; how a young negro girl swam so cunningly in capturing a duck that Ligon insists she be rewarded; and how a free Indian woman named Yarico was ensnared by the treachery of an Englishman, though she was 'as free born as he' (55). In each vignette, Ligon emphasizes the slave's unique abilities, pointing to the exceptions that disprove the rule, as in the case of the slave who died in a fire or another who put out a fire with his bare feet, both of whom he identifies as 'excellent servant[s].' He does not propose that *all* of the slaves are loyal in this way, conceding that in fact many of them express the stereotypical attribute of cruelty, and seeming to view the male slaves in particular as more inclined to express acts worthy of praise than their female counterparts, who go for the most part unnamed in his account.⁷⁰ But neither does he accept the rigid subjugation of all of them that has come to inform planter practice. Rather, he contends, there is 'no rule so general but hath his acception: for I believe, and I have strong motives to cause me to be of that perswasion, that there are as honest, faithful, and conscionable people amongst them, as amongst those of *Europe*, or any other part of the world' (53). And he repeatedly scolds planters for withholding the option of baptism from the slaves. As against the tendency to reduce all slaves to a single kind or class, Ligon identifies fine distinctions. In effect, then, each anecdote allows him to model the posture that he urges the planters to espouse at large: a kind of stewardship that recognizes and cultivates the difference of spirit among the members of any group, rather than collapsing those differences through too

violent a subjugation. So, on Sambo's behalf he pleads to his master to allow him to be baptized, stressing his resemblance to English worshippers in observing he is 'as ingenious, as honest, and as good a natur'd poor soul, as ever wore black, or eat green' (50); and on Macow's behalf he regrets that his own illness prevented him from tutoring him in the tones of music; and with the young girl, his intervention on her behalf wins her the reward.

The principle of stewardship that he embodies in these instances serves to model an ethic that he seeks to elicit in the planters at large. Hence, he calls upon the planters to be more lenient, urging them to 'cure and refresh the poor negroes' and 'our Christian Servants,' whose 'spirits are exhausted, by their hard labour, and sweating in the Sun' (93). Given his silence in the face of the violated Englishwomen aboard his ship, his calls for changes seem to register the extremity of planter practice and the threat it seemed to pose to the 'order of things' as viewed by an elite newcomer like Ligon. He proposes a range of modifications to their general treatment, reminding the planters to take care to sustain their servants' embodied spirits by allowing them a 'dram or two of this Spirits' at the day's end (93). He is pleased that Walrond, a planter who consistently stands out in his account as among the island's best, takes his advice and sends for Irish rugs to clothe his servants and slaves at night (44), and has decided to give both groups more flesh in their diet. It is not incidental that Ligon connects Walrond's admirable behaviour to his high social rank in England, indicating that he 'had been bred with much freedom, liberty, and plenty, in *England*' as he could not 'set his mind so earnestly upon his profit' as to ignore his own 'lawful pleasures' or the charity and stewardship expected of a man of his station (35). The implication is that 'mean' settlers are the ones less inclined to understand the reciprocal nature of service, who thereby run the risk of '[spoyling]' these 'very good servants' (44) through their 'extream ill usage' (45).

Indeed, he intimates that the settlers risk spoyling *themselves* – demeaning their own spirits – in being committed to a social system predicated on such violent oppositions. By minding their profit at the expense of their pleasure, such planters allow themselves to be 'riveted to the earth' and bound by 'earthly delights' (107), a posture that associates them with the lowness of servility rather than the height of gentility. In closing his text by outlining what gentle pleasures may best be enjoyed in a hot land like Barbados – particularly music and banquets – he provides what is, in effect, a recipe for maintaining high spirits in a land whose climate,

labour, and social practices seek to reduce this natural principle of social difference to naught but sweat.

Spirits of the Future

Ligon was not alone in perceiving the connections between the concept of spirits and a social hierarchy. At the time of his departure, when tensions between royalists and republicans flared up, a pamphlet written by republican Nicholas Foster framed its indictment of the privileges sought out by royalists with reference to their spirits and tempers. Describing the encroachments of these planters as like those of 'devouring Caterpillars,'⁷¹ he condemns them for having 'turbulent spirits' (38) and for actions derived from 'heate of bloud' (44). Proposing that their actions in Barbados are attempts to reclaim 'great inheritances' (35) lost in England and to 'insnare us in the greatest slavery' (13), Foster reproves the attempts on the part of elite Englishmen to compensate for these losses by making Barbados 'a receptacle for men of their owne spirits' (81). If Ligon construed the principle of spirits as the key to translating social distinction abroad, for Foster spirits denote little more than distemperance, turbulence, and the hot excesses of a ruling class. In his eyes, high spirits should not be fostered and preserved in the way that Ligon would have them, but should be rooted out. For him, they express a pernicious source of social unrest on the part of men who style themselves 'Lords of the Land' (80). As he charges, such men threaten to 'sheath their Swords in the hearts of all those that will not drink a health to the Figure of II and another to the confusion of the Independent dogs' (35–6). It is no small irony that he singled out Walrond, the man of high estate whom Ligon so admired, as the worst malefactor on the island (35–8). Though both Ligon and Foster were familiar with this prevalent discourse of spirits, their diametrically opposed sense of its relations to the 'real' – to social relations – expresses the strains of a culture in the throes of massive restructuring. For Ligon, spirits were the key to preserving distinctions that ensured benevolence and stewardship; for Foster, they stood as the sign of an oppressive social system that condoned the slavish and servile treatment of one Englishman by another.

Future generations would continue to regard Barbados as a colony characterized by coursing spirits, though with quite different implications. Nearly one hundred years after Ligon had visited Barbados and observed its potential to support the spirits underpinning English rank, the natural historian Griffith Hughes would extract a different view

using a similar language. Where Ligon considered high spirits a crucial link between gentlemen in England and those in Barbados – as precisely that which would preserve the connection between the elite members of both lands – Hughes understood the 'high flow' of 'Animal Spirits' which characterized those living in Barbados as producing a central difference between all Englishmen and all Barbadians. No longer presuming an equation between spirits and rank, he saw the 'volatile and lively Disposition' associated with Barbadian settlers as expressing instead a difference of nation. For him, the quality wrote in small the difference between 'Phlegmatic Londoners' and Barbadians of all ranks, who had been altered in nature over time by their hot climate.⁷² Collectively, they were a different people from the English, the qualities of their blood no longer typifying their relation to an elite group but rather their relation to a geography, whether England or Barbados. Although similar in tone to what Spenser had observed in the sixteenth century of the Old English living in Ireland, in fact there is a crucial difference of emphasis. For what Spenser perceived – and indeed sought to emphasize – was the extent to which the Old English elite had declined in blood. He argued that they were no longer civil or courtly like their peers in England and should be divested of their titles to reflect this change. But what Hughes perceived nearly two centuries later – in the fiery qualities of the Barbadian temperament – was an alteration that had separated one collectivity from another. Although both writers speak of these changes through discourses of blood, the continuities between them are largely superficial. For the terms that defined blood's meanings had radically shifted between the two moments, moving away from gentility and rank – or the differences *internal* to England – and toward nation and people – defining Englishmen in contradistinction to those from other lands.

If Hughes's words suggest the rise of nationalist identifications to surpass a system of race and blood that had breathed its last sighs possibly decades before he wrote, such changes were part of a still larger adjustment to ideologies of race. For in his account of Barbados we hear other reconfigurations of social terms and categories at play. For the way he discusses 'animal spirits' – in language emphasizing their material and physiological properties – captures a cultural opposition between the realms of culture and nature as compared with Ligon's moment. The redrawing of boundaries around these terms is visible in a range of ways. Firstly, we see it generically. Hughes's later account of the colony would describe itself not as a *history* of Barbados, as was the case with Ligon, but instead as a *natural* history of the island. This seemingly insignificant

generic shift, like the shift in his usage of 'spirits,' registers a fundamental realignment of the categories that held sway for Ligon, Evelyn, and any number of seventeenth-century men of letters who were also natural philosophers. For Hughes's text defines as ontologically separate concepts that Ligon's text doggedly conjoins. The new genre in which he writes demands, for instance, that the 'literary' be kept separate from the 'scientific.' Hughes complies with the requirements of this new discipline in that he repudiates the 'poetical dress' encumbering natural philosophy in ages gone by. Unlike Ligon, he perceives language that is anything but functionalist or transparent as a misrepresentation, as transmitting the false knowledge contained by 'fables' and 'fancies.'

The new genre in which he writes also predisposes him to conceive of nature as a realm quite distinct from culture – from the realm of the human. We see this in his concern to distinguish data that belongs in a history of nature from that which belongs to a history of man. He makes such distinctions in arguing that human histories necessarily mix pain with pleasure, falseness with truth, since man is prone to moral failings. Nature, by contrast, transmits truth unencumbered with falsity, as the fixed imprint of God's hand.⁷³ Notably, this view no longer allows that nature encodes social principles and forms, being a realm unto itself. As such, there is no evidence in Hughes's *Natural History* of the homologues that allowed Ligon to see plants ordered by hierarchies resembling social relations or Evelyn to see the same royal essence in the king-pine as in Charles II. Hughes, by contrast, commends Bacon for what he perceives as his preference for the world of nature above and against the world of court. He does so because by the time he came to write his natural history, the two realms so tightly conjoined by royalists of the mid-seventeenth century had come to be perceived as distinct, even opposed to one another.⁷⁴ Nature had one set of laws, culture another, and the gap between them would rapidly become insurmountable. It is this later moment – not the moment of Ligon's rank-infused, sociopolitical landscape – that expresses the epistemological conditions for modern race.

Coda: Beyond the Renaissance

Ligon was a royalist writing at a time of massive social upheaval. During the decade after his trip to Barbados, the system of labour used on the island would transform rapidly, moving from a mixed labour force of indentured servants and slaves to one dominantly driven by slave labour. His text powerfully captures the ideological unevenness of this moment, demonstrating perhaps most forcefully of the texts treated in this book the complex relations that existed between blood and colour as competing and overlapping systems of difference throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in England.

I have argued that Ligon's emphasis on the difference that inhered in blood, rank, and spirits obstructed his ability to view all Africans as slavish, subordinate, or naturally inferior by virtue of their skin colour, although it is clear that he is quite comfortable with a social hierarchy and the view it propounds that 'nature' predisposes everyone to a given place within its folds. Many Africans do seem to belong in Ligon's view at the bottom of these plantation societies, but it is not at all clear that he believes skin colour justifies these determinations, as evidenced by the unqualified praise that he has for many people of African descent, whether the mistress and virgins in St Iago whom he extols, the various loyal servant-slaves in Barbados whom he defends, or even the well-groomed African soldiers whom he admires in Cape Verde. In many cases, he seems intent on emphasizing African order in contradistinction to European decadence, as expressed in the Portuguese Governor, the riotous revolutionaries at home in England, or the 'mean' planters in Barbados who are bound so 'slavishly' to profits as to be servile masters. Indeed, so ingrained is his conception of hierarchy that it serves to prevent him from viewing many people from England as 'of a kind'

- 37 As quoted in Ransome, 'Wives for Virginia,' 7.
- 38 Ransome, 'Wives for Virginia,' 12.
- 39 *Declaration*, fols. 4 and 5.
- 40 For the Council's early attempts to frame transplantation to Virginia as physically restorative, see the discussion in chapter 3.
- 41 For this meaning of *subject*, see *OED*, v. 4, where it is defined as 'To place under something or in a lower position; to make subjacent *to*.' I am grateful to Peter Stallybrass for this observation.
- 42 For Restoration responses to this play and to the Fletcher canon at large, see Lawrence B. Wallis, *Fletcher, Beaumont and Company: Entertainers to the Jacobean Gentry* (Morningside Heights, NY: King's Crown P, 1947). Pepys, for one, described *The Sea Voyage* as a "mean" piece compared to Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (27).
- 43 Nicolas Coeffeteau, *A Table of Humane Passions. With their Causes and Effects*, trans. Edw. Grimeston (London, 1621), sig. A3–4.
- 44 For further detail on these sources, see Parr, *Three Renaissance Travel Plays*, introduction, 23–4.
- 45 For Fletcher's poem to the Countess of Huntingdon praising the estate at Ashby, see McMullan, *Politics of Unease*, 17–18.
- 46 For the Earl of Huntingdon's role in quelling the civil unrest provoked by acts of enclosure, see McMullan, *Politics of Unease*, esp. chap. 2. For an elaboration of James's policies at this time, see Leah S. Marcus, *The Politics of Mirth: Jonson, Herrick, Milton, Marvell, and the Defense of Old Holiday Pastimes* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1986), 19–20 and chap. 3.
- 47 For continuities of representation between Fletcher and Spenser, see James J. Yoch, 'The Renaissance Dramatization of Temperance: The Italian Revival of Tragicomedy and *The Faithful Shepherdess*,' in *Renaissance Tragicomedy: Explorations in Genre and Politics*, ed. Nancy Klein Maguire (NY: AMS P, 1987): 114–37.
- 48 Thomas D'Urfey, *A Commonwealth of Women. A Play as it is Acted at the Theatre Royal By their Majesties Servants* (1685), ed. Edmund Goldsmid (Edinburgh, 1886). Citations are to this edition and will appear parenthetically in the text and refer to page numbers.
- 49 For a compelling discussion of the ways in which Restoration theatre will rescript these associations, such that 'expertise in the passions diffuses from elite skill to something all subjects are expected to understand in themselves,' see Katherine Rowe, 'Humoral Knowledge and Liberal Cognition in Davenant's *Macbeth*,' in *Reading the Early Modern Passions: Essays in the Cultural History of Emotion*, ed. Gail Kern Paster, Katherine Rowe, and Mary Floyd-Wilson (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 2004), 169–91, esp. 178.

5. High Spirits, Nature's Ranks, and Ligon's Indies

- 1 John Evelyn, *The Diary*, ed. William Bray, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1955), 1:43. The passage in its entirety reads as follows:

'I saw the magnificent entry of the French Ambassador Colbert, received in the banqueting house. I had never seen a richer coach than that which he came in to Whitehall. Standing by his Majesty at dinner in the presence, there was of that rare fruit called the king-pine, growing in Barbadoes and the West Indies; the first of them I had ever seen. His Majesty having cut it up, was pleased to give me a piece off his own plate to taste of; but, in my opinion, it falls short of those ravishing varieties of deliciousness described in Capt. Ligon's history, and others; but possibly it might, or certainly was, much impaired in coming so far; it has yet a grateful acidity, but tastes more like the quince and melon than of any other fruit he mentions.'
- 2 Richard Ligon, *A True & Exact history of the Island of Barbados* (London, 1657), 11. All subsequent quotations of Ligon will be included parenthetically in the text with reference to this edition's pagination.
- 3 Keith A. Sandiford interprets Ligon's text in these terms, insofar as he argues for a reading of the text as inaugurating a Creole struggle to 'win and secure cultural legitimacy' by 'colonizing the metropole with Creole desire and colonial ethics'; see his *Cultural Politics of Sugar: Caribbean Slavery and Narratives of Colonialism* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000), 16 and 29.
- 4 For an excellent discussion of how attitudes toward nature begin to split across the seventeenth century along royalist and republican lines, and how these political differences intersect with Cavalier and Metaphysical poetics of this era, see Robert Watson, *Back To Nature: The Green and the Real in the Late Renaissance* (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 2006), esp. chap. 5, 'Metaphysical and Cavalier Styles of Consciousness.'
- 5 Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, trans. Catherine Porter (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1993). Latour observes: 'I am not claiming that the moderns are unaware of what they do, I am simply saying that what they do – innovate on a large scale in the production of hybrids – is possible only because they steadfastly hold to the absolute dichotomy between the order of Nature and that of Society' (40). He contrasts this tendency to instate a 'Great Divide' (39) between 'humans and nonhumans' (41) with 'the premoderns,' whom he describes as '[dwelling] endlessly and obsessively on those connections between nature and culture' (41).

- 6 See Karen Ordahl Kupperman, 'Ligon, Richard (c. 1585–1662),' in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2004). See also Susan Dwyer Amussen, *Caribbean Exchanges: Slavery and the Transformation of English Society, 1640–1700* (Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 2007).
- 7 According to Amussen, Thomas Modiford was a 'fellow Royalist from Exeter' and 'the son of a wealthy merchant and former mayor,' who offered Ligon 'a place on a ship to the West Indies' (*Caribbean Exchanges*, 46). Compellingly, in the early 1650s, Modiford would defect to the Parliamentarians, and would later become an early governor of Jamaica (46, 32).
- 8 See Kupperman, *ODNB*.
- 9 In describing the period leading up to the Civil War, Lawrence Stone describes the tensions as deriving from 'a single society of two distinct cultures, cultures that were reflected in ideals, religion, art, literature'; see *The Causes of the English Revolution, 1529–1642*, 2nd ed. (London: Ark, 1986), 105–6, as quoted in Watson, *Back to Nature*, 143. David Underdown builds on this view in proposing that the body politic of the 1640s be seen as expressing 'two quite different constellations of social, political, and cultural force ... On the one side stood those who put their trust in the traditional conception of the harmonious, vertically-integrated society ... On the other stood those ... who ... [sought to] use their power to reform society according to their own principles of order and godliness'; see *Revel, Riot, and Rebellion: Popular Politics and Culture in England, 1603–1660* (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1985), 40–1, as quoted in Watson, *Back to Nature*, 143.
- 10 This point is made forcefully in Michael Craton, 'Reluctant Creoles: The Planters' World in the British West Indies,' in *Strangers within the Realm: Cultural Margins of the First British Empire*, ed. Bernard Bailyn and Philip D. Morgan (Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1991), 314–62, esp. 327. Indeed, as Craton argues, the plantations of the West Indies tended to perpetuate 'a native class of landed gentry even more tightly tied to the aristocratic system than were their English counterparts' and 'gravitated toward an aristocratic norm or ideal, derived from feudal culture, in their attitudes and behaviour' (329). Precisely because these principles were being so strongly challenged by the 'rising tide of bourgeois capitalism' expressed in the Civil Wars, these attitudes witnessed a powerful resurgence in the context of planter culture (327). Such attitudes, I suggest, are everywhere visible in Ligon's account of Barbados. Kim F. Hall observes them as well in a description of the plantation of Sir Modiford, friend of Ligon and eventual governor of the colony; she observes that 'his nostalgic lens turns the Barbadian landscape into a feudal estate where slave-trading sugar capitalists become benevolent lords of their own castles. His vision promises aspiring gentry "castles" which represent both wealth and paternalistic control over labourers'; see her 'Culinary Spaces, Colonial Spaces: The Gendering of Sugar in the Seventeenth Century,' in *Feminist Readings of Early Modern Culture: Emerging Subjects*, ed. Valerie Traub, M. Lindsay Kaplan, and Dymphna Callaghan (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996), 168–90, esp. 184.
- 11 This is the argument that Debora Shuger makes in her important essay 'Irishmen, Aristocrats, and Other White Barbarians,' *Renaissance Quarterly* 50 (1997): 494–525. She demonstrates the intimate connections between natural and social forms underpinning this text by observing how the cultivation of crops is viewed as analogous to the cultivation of people.
- 12 See, for instance, the edited collection by Gianna Pomata and Nancy G. Siraisi, eds., *Historia: Empiricism and Erudition in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005); and Barbara J. Shapiro, *Probability and Certainty in Seventeenth-Century England: A Study of the Relationships between Natural Science, Religion, History, Law, and Literature* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1983).
- 13 See, for instance, Jennifer L. Morgan, *Laboring Women: Reproduction and Gender in New World Slavery* (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 2004); Hall, 'Culinary Spaces.' Importantly, Amussen argues that the text is also embedded on a crossroads of sorts regarding conceptions of race, identifying the 'specific set of social relations in the Caribbean colonies' as paving the way for 'the emergence of what we now think of as "race"' (*Caribbean Exchanges*, 23). As such, she sees the text as actively remaking *race* rather than inheriting a race system that was already rooted in the oppositions of skin colour.
- 14 Amussen records that in 1644 – a few years before Ligon's arrival to the island – there were about eight hundred African slaves in Barbados, or less than 10 per cent of a population of ten thousand. But the purchase of slaves was rapidly on the rise and by 1660, approximately fifteen years later, the number of enslaved Africans on the island is estimated at forty thousand (*Caribbean Exchanges*, 29–30).
- 15 Amussen, *Caribbean Exchanges*, 10 and 42.
- 16 As quoted in Wrightson, 'The social order of early modern England,' 192.
- 17 For this argument, see Ezra Tawil, *The Making of Racial Sentiment: Slavery and the Birth of the Frontier Romance* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2006).
- 18 In this respect Ligon embodies a way of perceiving nature that is characteristically royalist, one that Watson suggests typifies Cavalier poetry of the same period. He suggests that Cavalier poetry and Metaphysical poetry split along the tension of 'whether the manifest world is an arbitrary mental and verbal construction or a stable material hierarchy,' with royalists clearly favouring the latter view (*Back to Nature*, 34). Royalists, Watson explains,

- remained ‘closely in touch with nature along established hierarchical terms’ (137–8).
- 19 That the terms *race* and *kind* function as synonyms for Ligon is made explicit when he discusses the island’s flies. An advocate of spontaneous generation, Ligon urges ‘there is not only a race of all these kinds, that go in a generation, but upon new occasions, new kinds’ (63). Here, Ligon understands *race*, even in the context of this family of flies, to designate a common lineage, describing creatures linked in kinship or ‘kind,’ a dominant usage that I have tracked throughout this book.
- 20 See, for instance, Mary Floyd-Wilson and Garrett A. Sullivan Jr, eds., *Environment and Embodiment in Early Modern England* (New York and Houndmills, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007). See also ‘Embodiment and Environment in Early Modern Drama and Performance,’ special issue of *Renaissance Drama* 35 (2006), devoted to the same topic, for which Floyd-Wilson and Sullivan Jr served as guest editors.
- 21 John Sutton describes early modern bodies as ‘semipermeable irrigated containers, moist sponges filled with interchangeable fluids’; see his *Philosophy and Memory Traces: Descartes to Connectionism* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998), esp. 42.
- 22 Gail Kern Paster describes her work as challenging notions of an autonomous early modern subject in her essay ‘The Tragic Subject and Its Passions,’ in *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespearean Tragedy*, ed. Claire McEachern (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002), 142–59, esp. 153.
- 23 For a more extensive critique of the use of ecological models in early modern literary criticism, see Julian Yates, ‘Humanist Habitats; Or, “Eating Well” with Thomas More’s *Utopia*,’ in *Environment and Embodiment in Early Modern England*, ed. Mary Floyd-Wilson and Garrett A. Sullivan Jr (Houndmills, UK, and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 187–209.
- 24 This is the direction that the introduction to Floyd-Wilson and Sullivan’s *Environment and Embodiment* moves in deconstructing the oppositions that seem to inform the collection’s title and the collection’s emphasis more at large.
- 25 In defence of this claim, see Raymond Williams’s well-known account of culture, prior to the eighteenth century, as a process, as something that is *done* to animals or plants, as in ‘cultivation.’ He observes: ‘Culture as an independent noun, an abstract process or the product of such process, is not important before 1C18 and is not common before mC19’; see *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (New York: Oxford UP, 1983), 88. See also Lorraine Daston, ‘The Nature of Nature in Early Modern Europe,’ *Configurations* 6, no. 2 (1998): 149–72, esp. 154. Daston argues that where moderns set ‘nature’ in opposition to ‘culture,’ early moderns positioned it in relation to a set of terms such as ‘supernatural,’ ‘preternatural,’ ‘artificial,’ and ‘unnatural.’
- 26 See Bruno Latour, *Pandora’s Hope: Essays on the Reality of Science Studies* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1999), 16.
- 27 Compare Ligon’s concern to emphasize the elite attributes of Barbadian nature with Spenser’s concern that English culture – styles of dress, language, gendered relations – not be disrupted in Ireland.
- 28 This seems to be Sandiford’s understanding of the tract’s genre insofar as he attempts to deconstruct the title’s ‘pretensions to truth’ in what he describes as a ‘historical narrative of Barbados’; see ‘The Pretexts and Pretenses of Hybridity in Ligon’s *True and Exact History*,’ *Journal of Commonwealth and Postcolonial Studies* 9, no. 2 (2002): 1–23, esp. 1.
- 29 José de Acosta, *The naturall and moral historie of the East and West Indies.: intreating of the remarkeable things of heaven, of the elements ...* (London, 1604).
- 30 Barbara J. Shapiro, ‘History and Natural History in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century England: An Essay on the Relationship between Humanism and Science,’ in *English Scientific Virtuosi in the 16th and 17th Centuries: Papers read at a Clark Library Seminar 5 February 1977* (Los Angeles: William Andrews Clark Memorial Library at UCLA, 1979), 3–55, esp. 13. See also the more extended treatment of these arguments in her book *Probability and Certainty in Seventeenth-Century England*.
- 31 Shapiro, ‘History and Natural History,’ 3 and 4.
- 32 See Pomata and Siraisi, *Historia*, 2 and 5. For a discussion of the term *history* in the context of drama, specifically how ‘histories’ were not yet generically distinct from ‘tragedies’ and not yet yoked to ‘historical materials,’ see Margreta de Grazia, *Hamlet without Hamlet* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007), esp. 51–2. De Grazia indicates that “‘History’ was applied as loosely and broadly to playtexts as to other kinds of texts to signify a narrative or story’ (51). She argues for the lability of early modern notions of ‘history,’ explicating how ‘history’ was not yet severed from poetical discourse, much in the way that Pomata and Siraisi suggest it did not yet express a kind of representation exclusively dedicated to human affairs and temporality.
- 33 Brian W. Ogilvie, ‘Natural History, Ethics, and Physico-Theology,’ in Pomata and Siraisi, *Historia*, 75–103, esp. 98. See also his *The Science of Describing: Natural History in Renaissance Europe* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2006).
- 34 Amussen, *Caribbean Exchanges*, 45. See also her discussion of an intermediary text between those of Ligon and Sloane by John Taylor; although his ‘Mulum in Parvo’ remained unpublished, it conveys the knowledge of Jamaica he gleaned after a visit to the island in 1686.
- 35 See, for instance, Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, *Nature, Empire, and Nation: Explo-*

- rations of the History of Science in the Iberian World* (Stanford, CA: Stanford UP, 2006), esp. chap. 2.
- 36 Paula Findlen, 'Courting Nature,' in *Cultures of Natural History*, ed. N. Jardine, J.A. Secord, and E.C. Spary (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996), 57–74, esp. 72.
- 37 See Sir Francis Bacon, *Sylva Sylvarum: Or, A Natural History, in Ten Centuries*, in *The Works of Francis Bacon*, ed. Basil Montagu, 16 vols. (London: William Pickering, 1825–34), 4:280. Subsequent editions of this text would appear in 1629, 1631, 1635, 1639, 1651, 1658, 1664, and 1670.
- 38 Bacon indicates that he has read Spanish writers like Acosta in his *Great Instauration*. In this text he drums up interest in new accounts of nature by urging: 'we must absolutely insist and often recall that men's attention in the research and compilation of natural history has to be completely different from now on, and transformed to the opposite of the current practices'; see his *Novum Organon*, ed. Lisa Jardine and Michael Silverthorne (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000), 169 and 146.
- 39 See Kupperman's entry 'Ligon, Richard (c. 1585–1662),' in the *ODNB*, which establishes these patronage connections. For the widespread opposition to the draining of the fens, see *Sir William Killigrew His Answer to the Fenne Mens Objections Against the Earle of Lindsey his Drayning in Lincolnshire* (London, 1649).
- 40 See Robert J. Mayhew, "'Geography is twinned with divinity': The Laudian Geography of Peter Heylyn," in *Enlightenment Geography: The Political Languages of British Geography, 1650–1850* (New York: St Martin's P, 2000), 49–65.
- 41 See, for instance, Daniel Carey, 'Compiling Nature's History: Travellers and Travel Narratives in the Early Royal Society,' *Annals of Science* 54 (1997): 269–92.
- 42 See Hall, 'Culinary Spaces,' esp. 180 and 184.
- 43 The story becomes popularized in the eighteenth century by Richard Steele in *The Spectator* (Tuesday, 13 March 1711). Here the relatively minor episode in Ligon's text begins to accrue a sentimental emphasis, insofar as the author indicates that after hearing this tale, he 'was so touch'd with this Story ... that [he] left the Room with Tears in [his] Eyes' (3). Compellingly, the narrative is introduced by a woman, Arietta, as defence against the railings of men 'done to her Sex.' She appeals to Ligon's history as a narrative shorn of embellishments, one that expresses the 'Facts' that come 'from plain People, and from such as have not either Ambition or Capacity to embellish their Narrations with any Beauties of Imagination' (2). Her reference to Ligon as an 'honest Traveller' presumably concerned only with the facts of nature, severed from culture, already testifies to the epistemic shift this chapter seeks to identify. In his own moment, Ligon's 'facts' were culturally and politically charged events, not the 'plain' factual discourse that natural history of the eighteenth century will aspire to be.
- 44 The use of 'romance' to denote the trappings of poetical or literary writing is characteristic of both Thomas Sprat, *The History of the Royal Society* (London, 1667), and René Descartes, *Discourse on Method* (London, 1649).
- 45 For the connections of these tropes to romance at large, see Patricia A. Parker, *Inescapable Romance: Studies in the Poetics of a Mode* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1979).
- 46 Amussen substantiates this view in observing that 'Ligon had a strong sense of rank. He distinguished between "gentlemen," "passengers," and "women"; his views – both of labouring women and people of African ancestry – were 'shaped by expectations of the social hierarchy; in this case, class trumped national or racial identity.' She also suggests a necessary tension between his view of the world and those dominant for the Portuguese planters in noting that 'the social distinctions that mattered so much to Ligon were invisible to the Cape Verdeans, while the Cape Verdeans' conception of collective honor was alien to the English' (*Caribbean Exchanges*, 48).
- 47 Today this island, the largest within the Cape Verdean archipelago, is called 'Santiago,' or 'Santiago' in Cape Verdean creole, although in English it has been rendered in different forms across time. During Darwin's day, it was referred to as 'St Jago.' Throughout this chapter, I follow Ligon's usage in referring to the island as 'St Jago.'
- 48 In Spanish the title of the text is *Espejo de príncipes y caballeros, en el cual se cuentan los immortals hechos del Caballero del Febo y de su hermano Rosicler, hijos del grande Emperador Trabacio* (1555), and it was authored by Diego Ortúñez de Calahorra. The heroic protagonist – Caballero del Febo – was translated alternately as 'Knight of the Sun' and 'Knight of the Dawn.'
- 49 See also Keith Sandiford's account of this moment in 'The Pretext and Pretenses of Hybridity in Ligon's *True and Exact History*,' 6.
- 50 See, for instance, Amussen, *Caribbean Exchanges*, 63. Although Amussen sees this moment as a muted version of the 'pornographic' attitude that Ligon displays toward African slave women in Barbados, she also allows that it expresses 'muddled language' and 'confusion' on Ligon's part in terms of socially locating an elite woman of African ancestry, in that he addresses her with 'courtly compliment' at the same time that he seeks to confirm whether she has the white teeth that many attribute to Africans (47–8). Although I differ somewhat with Amussen's reading of this moment, her account of Ligon's optic more generally captures Ligon's ambivalence in the face of African difference, and the text's dependence on early modern

- social forms. She tracks continuities with modern racialism without collapsing the difference of two quite distinct epistemologies, arguing that 'Ligon's account demonstrates that the construction of racial identities for both the English and those they enslaved, was a process – that it did not happen all at once ... The views of slavery and race held by English men in the Caribbean changed as the social structure of plantation economies became more settled. The very categories through which these men understood the world shifted' (67). For a reading that understands Ligon's ideology as contiguous with modern racialism, see Morgan's chapter "'Some Could Suckle over Their Shoulder': Male Travelers, Female Bodies, and the Gendering of Racial Ideology," in *Laboring Women*; Morgan sees Ligon's description of the Padre's black mistress as expressing his sense of 'the deceptive beauty and ultimate savagery of blackness' (14). Given Ligon's emphasis on the majestic demeanour and graceful comportment of the Mistress, I see the claim that he associates her African identity with 'savagery' as moving too quickly to flatten the power dynamics of this highly transitional historical moment. I suggest, by contrast, that Ligon's emphasis on her rank – her queenly status – here impedes his ability to denigrate her because she has dark skin. He expresses, that is, what is fast becoming a residual racial system – valuing the ontological charge carried by blood – rather than an emergent one – emphasizing the ontological charge of skin colour.
- 51 Kim Hall emphasizes the courtly emphasis in this allegory of Barbados as a Queen by observing the extent to which it refigures long-standing representations of foreign lands as "open," innocent, and nude.' This queen, by contrast, is 'dressed in tapestry and embroidery' ('Culinary Spaces,' 180).
- 52 A critic like Jennifer Morgan who reads Ligon for his emphasis on African monstrosity cannot account for the presence of this comparison to Queen Anne. She says that this comparison 'must have surprised his English readers' for dignifying a black woman (*Laboring Women*, 13). Perhaps surprise at this description expresses less the assumptions of an early modern readership than a modern one, insofar as we are unaccustomed to the ways that a person's rank – in this case an African person – could trump physiognomic differences that modern racial ideologies encourage us to perceive as the more important register of difference. Aphra Behn's royal African king, Oroonoko, suggests a similar emphasis; see her *Oroonoko: Or, the Royal Slave*, in *Oroonoko, The Rover, and Other Writings*, ed. Janet Todd (New York: Penguin, 1992).
- 53 See the concluding passage in Sir Walter Raleigh, *The discoverie of the large, rich, and bewtiful Empyre of Guana*, ed. Neil L. Whitehead (Norman: U of Oklahoma P, 1997), 196. See also the now-famous discussion of this trope in Louis A. Montrose, 'The Work of Gender in the Discourse of Discovery,' *Representations* 33 (1991): 1–41.
- 54 For the centrality of clothing as a marker of social identity for this period, see Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000).
- 55 Analysing the 'art of Cookery' that consumes much of Ligon's interest while in Barbados, Kim Hall notes that 'Ligon's emphasis ... is on the duplication of already known (aristocratic) dishes. His overwhelming concern is whether the delicacies found on the English table can be replicated in Barbados' ('Culinary Spaces,' 181).
- 56 Ligon is very aware of his tendency to digress and often blames those he perceives to embody a form of degeneracy for encouraging this tendency in him. An early example is when he says 'But I am misled into this digression by this wicked *Portugal*, whose unlucky Countenance before we came to the *Island*, gave me the occasion to say somewhat of him, and his miscarriage in the *Island*, before I came at it' (8).
- 57 There is a long-standing debate among historians about precisely this question. For those who argue that a racist ideology preceded the institution of slavery, see Jordan Winthrop, *White Over Black: American attitudes toward the Negro, 1550–1812* (Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1968). For those who have argued that racial ideology gets produced as an effect of the economic institution of slavery, see Eric Eustace Williams, *Capitalism & Slavery* (Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1944); David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1966); and Barbara Jeanne Fields, *Slavery and Freedom on the Middle Ground: Maryland during the Nineteenth Century* (New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 1985). Susan Amussen has expressed support for this latter view in her *Caribbean Exchanges*, arguing that 'slaveholding ... pushed the English to move toward systematic racial thinking,' observing as well that 'race based on skin colour coexisted with other methods of defining difference' (*Caribbean Exchanges*, 12).
- 58 See, for instance, his description of a slave who died in a fire at the ingenio as 'an excellent servant' (93) and his use of the phrase 'poor Negres and Christian servants' (107) which links the two groups under the rubric of a servant class. Elsewhere he urges that 'servants, both Christians, and slaves, labour and travel ten hours in a day' (27). Conversely, he seems to place servants in the same category as slaves in being regarded as 'tradeable objects' when he observes: 'The Commodities these Ships bring to this Island, are, *servants* and *slaves*, both men and women' (40). Elsewhere he describes how newly arriving servants are scrutinized and then 'bought' by planters before stepping foot on the island (44).

- 59 For a detailed analysis of the system of service that prevailed in England, see 'Shakespeare and the Bonds of Service,' Michael Neill, in *The Shakespearean International Yearbook*, ed. Graham Bradshaw, Tom Bishop, Robin Headlam Wells, 5 (2005): 1–144, and Neill, "'His Master's Ass': Slavery, Service, and Subordination in *Othello*," in *Shakespeare and the Mediterranean*, ed. Tom Clayton, Susan Brock, and Vincente Forès (Newark: U of Delaware P, 2004), 215–29. See also Peter Laslett, *The World We Have Lost* (New York: Scribner, 1966).
- 60 The work of historian Hilary McD. Beckles gives credence to Ligon's claim that the island's population of indentured servants lived in deplorable conditions comparable to those of the island's slave population during the first two decades after the introduction of sugar; see *White Servitude and Black Slavery in Barbados, 1627–1715* (Knoxville: U of Tennessee P, 1989).
- 61 In support of the view that white servants and black slaves were merged in early planter economies into something akin to a homogenized underclass, Keith Wrightson argues that 'Relations between masters and servants were highly exploitative. A servant was "a thing, a commodity with a price," to be bought and sold, or even gambled for ... subject to a degree of bondage which as John Rolfe observed, would be "held in England a thing most intolerable."' In speaking specifically of conditions in Virginia, he argues further that: 'they were not slaves. They had hopes of freedom and even of advancement if they survived the conditions of their servitude ... But the distinction between their situation and that of the small numbers of African slaves introduced into Virginia from Barbadoes at this time was not necessarily apparent to them. White servants and black slaves sometimes joined in conspiracy or ran away together – a fact which has led some historians to speculate that in early Virginia, as in those Caribbean plantation economies which initially combined servitude and slavery, "class rather than race may have been the bond that united workers"' ('Class,' 140).
- 62 Bacon discusses these substances in many of his works, but see especially his *Novum Organon*, 173.
- 63 For a discussion of how this concept changed during the Renaissance, see Katharine Park, 'The Organic Soul,' in *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy*, ed. Quentin Skinner and Eckhard Kessler (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1988), 464–84.
- 64 Sir Thomas Elyot, *Castel of Helth* (London, 1541), 11; and Marsilio Ficino, *The Book of Life*, ed. and trans. Charles Boer (Texas: Spring Publications, 1980), 94.
- 65 Bacon, *Sylva Sylvarum*, 4:280.
- 66 Bacon, *Novum Organon*, 107–8.

- 67 As quoted in Sutton, *Philosophy and Memory Traces*, 96.
- 68 For this phrase, see, for instance, his reference to the construction of enclosures for the hogs as a form of 'good ordering' (34); his praise for the planters' ability to '[order] every thing so well' as regards their political disputes (57); and his observation that 'with good ordering' the poisonous cassava root can assume the restorative form of bread (68).
- 69 Amussen, *Caribbean Exchanges*, 63–4.
- 70 For an elaboration of this point, see Amussen, *Caribbean Exchanges*, 62–4.
- 71 Nicholas Foster, *A Briefe Relation of the Late Horrid Rebellion Acted in the Island Barbadas, in the West-Indies. Wherein is contained Their Inhumane Acts and Actions, in Fining and Banishing the Well-affected to the Parliament of England; (both men and women) without the least cause given them so to doe: Dispossesting all such as any way opposed these their mischievous actions. Acted by the Waldronds and their Abettors* (London, 1650), 16–17. All references are to this edition and appear parenthetically in the text.
- 72 Griffith Hughes, *The Natural History of Barbados* (London, 1750), 9–11. See also an overview of English perceptions of Barbadians in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in Jack P. Greene, 'Changing Identity in the British Caribbean: Barbados as a Case Study,' in *Colonial Identity in the Atlantic World*, ed. Nicholas Canny and Anthony Pagden (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1987), 213–66.
- 73 Ligon's moralistic condemnation of the levelling energies of withs, explored above, stands in contradistinction to Hughes's treatment of nature as beyond the purview of moral and social censure.
- 74 Hughes, *Natural History of Barbados*, preface, ii, iii, v.

Coda: Beyond the Renaissance

- 1 See Hilary McD. Beckles, 'A "riotous and unruly lot": Irish indentured servants and freemen in the English West Indies, 1644–1713,' *William and Mary Quarterly* 47, no. 4 (1990): 503–22, esp. 506 and 517. See also his 'The concept of "white slavery" in the English Caribbean during the early seventeenth century,' in *Early Modern Conceptions of Property*, ed. John Brewer and Susan Staves (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), 572–84. Here Beckles refers to a major shift from a 'white to a black labor regime between 1645 and 1680' in the English West Indies (572–3) and describes the institution of indentured servitude that emerged in the context of these plantations as resembling 'chattel slavery more than the traditional English servitude' (575). He links it to a 'wider system of property and possessory relations in human beings developed in the colonies' (578).