Lerner, Ross. 2023. Marvell's Issues: Race and the Curse of Ham. *Marvell Studies* 8(1): pp. 1–20. DOI: https://doi.org/10.16995/marv.10506

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Marvell's Issues: Race and the Curse of Ham

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In the penultimate section of "The First Anniversary," the attack on the Fifth Monarchists, Andrew Marvell develops an extended comparison of Cromwell to Noah that renders the Protectorate's sectarian enemies "a Chammish issue." This essay argues that this comparison is a moment of involuted, rebounded, doubled, and short-circuited racialization, at once participating in a project of early modern race-making and revealing that project to be unstable and incoherent. It thus brings premodern critical race studies into conversation with a long tradition of formal analysis of Marvell's stylistic reversals by such critics as Christopher Ricks and John Carey to produce a new reading of Marvell's condemnation of the Fifth Monarchists and its significance for the poem's vision of integration into the church-state under Cromwell.

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What was Andrew Marvell's issue with the curse of Ham? In the penultimate section of "The First Anniversary," the intriguingly hyperactive and reactionary attack on the Fifth Monarchists, the poet develops an extended comparison of Cromwell to Noah that renders the Protectorate's sectarian enemies "a Chammish issue."[1] Marvell's peculiar restaging of the curse of Ham is worth returning to in a moment when David Norbrook has urged Marvellians to account for the neglected echoes of enslavement in the poet's verse, and when the curse of Ham has taken center stage in debates about Milton, slavery, and race issuing forth from Mary Nyquist's book, *Arbitrary Rule: Slavery, Tyranny, and the Power of Life and Death*.[2]

This essay makes two claims that more than vainly curl into each other. First, Marvell's analogizing of the Fifth Monarchists to Ham's cursed lineage constitutes a complex, cryptic moment of racialization in the poem that scholars have not yet accounted for in these terms. And second, the poem brings forth its "Chammish issue" through a multiplication of the stylistic techniques, or tics, of reversal, rebounding, doubling, self-involution, and short-circuiting that have been the focus of some of our best formal analyses of Marvell.[3] What John Carey influentially describes as Marvell's fascination with "the self-defeating reversibility of our actions," exemplified by "the mower mown" of "Damon the Mower" (80), winds its way through the poet's description of the "Chammish issue," both to produce and disrupt a sense that their Chammishness is a product of racializing poetic justice.[4]

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[1] Andrew Marvell, "The First Anniversary of the Government under His Highness the Lord Protector," in *The Poems of Andrew Marvell*, ed. Nigel Smith (Harlow: Longman, 2007), l. 293. All references to Marvell's poetry are to this edition. Line numbers will appear in parentheses.

[2] David Norbrook, "Marvell, Globalisation, and Slavery," in *Imagining Andrew Marvell at 400*, ed. Matthew C. Augustine, Giulio J. Pertile, and Steven N. Zwicker (Oxford: The British Academy/Oxford University Press, 2022), 88–108; Mary Nyquist, *Arbitrary Rule: Slavery, Tyranny, and the Power of Life and Death* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 137–47. At MLA 2024, there will be a panel called "The Controversy Over John Milton's Attitude Toward Slavery: Opposing Views," and the Milton Society of America is sponsoring a panel there on "Milton and Bodily Freedom" that lists enslavement as one of the topics under discussion.

[3] I am thinking especially of Christopher Ricks, "Andrew Marvell: 'Its own resemblance,'" republished in his *The Force of Poetry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 34–59; and John Carey, "Reversals Transposed: An Aspect of Marvell's Imagination," in *Approaches to Marvell: The York Tercentenary Lectures*, ed. C. A. Patrides (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978), 136–54. See also Nigel Smith's claim that "pursuit of doubleness is at the heart of Marvell's understanding of literary activity," in "'Mirrored Doubles': Andrew Marvell, The Remaking of Poetry and the Poet's Career," in *Classical Literary Careers and their Reception*, ed. Philip Hardie and Helen Moore (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 230. Joanna Picciotto suggests reversibility, doubling, and involution were not so much Marvell's signature poetic techniques, "those that seem most inimitably his," as they were "stylisations of widely prevalent discursive habits." See "Practising Flow in Marvell and Ashbery," in *Imagining Andrew Marvell at 400*, 333. On the more widespread use of reflexivity in seventeenth-century English verse, see David S. Reid, "The Reflexive Turn in Early Seventeenth-Century Poetry," *English Literary Renaissance* 32, no. 3 (2002): 408–25.

[4] Carey, "Reversals Transposed," 144.

While scholars have explored how Marvell appropriates the polemical use of "Chamite" in mid-seventeenth-century heresiography to cast the Fifth Monarchists as radically other, we have not yet considered the relationship of Marvell's Ham to seventeenth-century race-making.[5] Norbrook has recently suggested the poem's allusion to the curse of Ham "shows no trace of the racial element that would later emerge," but I argue there are ways that his curse of Ham does, in fact, participate in the poem's racialization of internal enemies of the Cromwellian church-state.[6]

As Marvell scholars have begun to think more about race in his poetry, Blaine Greteman has recently proposed that, in "Mourning," Marvell's mention of "the Indian slaves / That dive for pearl through seas profound" (29–30) at once evokes and aestheticizes "the reality of forced, racialized, labor," refusing to illuminate what it draws the reader's attention to.[7] I propose that something similar takes place in "The First Anniversary," where strategies for racialization, including the allusion to the curse of Ham, emerge explicitly in the poem only to be aestheticized through a series of complex poetic inversions. The process of racialized aestheticization in "The First Anniversary" works very differently than in "Mourning," however, and not least because Marvell pointedly elides the issue of potentially racialized servitude that Ham's curse could suggest in the moment of the poem's composition. The allusion to the curse of Ham takes place in the most polemical and satirical section of the poem, in a passage that seems self-consciously less interested in aestheticizing politics and labor than the sections depicting the construction of the Cromwellian state and the Instrument of Government. But precisely for that reason, the presence of Marvell's "boomerang" lyrical techniques in the passage alluding to Ham's curse, which show us actions rebounding on agents in a poem whose "architectonics [...] promise nothing of inversion and incapacity," suggests how aestheticization both drives and unsettles the racialized othering of religious and political enemies in the poem.[8] Such attention to the at once identity-fixing and -unfixing strategies of race-making helps us better

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[5] David Loewenstein, *Representing Revolution in Milton and his Contemporaries: Religion, Politics, and Polemics in Radical Puritanism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 153. For a wide-ranging account of the dynamics of polemicization and polarization in the context of the English Civil Wars, see David Como, *Radical Parliamentarians and the English Civil War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 19, which analyzes how "actors habitually emphasized their opponents' danger to the social order (and their own conformity to that order)" and "stressed their opposites' threat to secular and temporal power (alongside their own credentials as props for those authorities)."

[6] Norbrook, "Marvell, Globalisation, and Slavery," 97n44.

[7] Blaine Greteman, "White Tears and Indian Slaves in Marvell's 'Mourning,'" *Marvell Studies* 7, no. 1 (2022): 10.

[8] On the Marvellian boomerang, see Nigel Smith, "The Boomerang Theology of Andrew Marvell," *Renaissance and Reformation / Renaissance et Réforme* 25, no. 4 (2001): 139–55. The claim that "the architectonics of 'The First Anniversary' promise nothing of inversion and incapacity" comes from Derek Hirst and Steven N. Zwicker, *Andrew Marvell, Orphan of the Hurricane* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 57.

understand the force of Marvell's satire of religious radicalism, and the related threats that religious radicals and racial others seemed to pose during—and not only during—the Protectorate.

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The story of the curse of Ham from Genesis remains no less mysterious for its familiarity. Noah drinks too much and falls asleep uncovered. One of his sons, Ham, the father of Canaan, sees Noah naked and tells his brothers, Shem and Japheth, who walk backwards into their father's tent and cover him, carefully avoiding any view of him. When Noah wakes up from his bender, he somehow knows "what his younger son had done unto him," in the King James translation. Noah immediately pronounces: "Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren. And he said, Blessed be the Lord God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant. God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant."[9] Genesis mentions nothing of what Ham did to Noah other than see him. Surprised that an act of mere seeing could solicit a curse on Ham's descendants, rabbinical commentators offer a number of speculative possibilities, including castration and sexual assault, though with nothing like concrete textual evidence.[10]

The story seems almost prepackaged for psychoanalysis, the *Ur-Urszene* that Freud himself perhaps repressed.[11] Its numerous plot holes suggest repression as a structuring force. How does Noah know that Ham has seen him? Why does seeing him naked and telling his brothers warrant a curse? And why does Noah not curse Ham but his descendants in Canaan? Who exactly are the servants whom the Canaanites are being cursed to serve?

More pressing than any of these hermeneutic difficulties is the retroactive textual imposition of Blackness on some of Ham's descendants for Ham's supposed crime, the linking of their role as servants of servants with the blackening of their skin. According to David Goldenberg, this association of Ham with Blackness is at least in part due to third- or fourth-century-C.E. Talmudic commentary, which misunderstood the etymology of Ham's name. Because of a later shift in Hebrew vowels, the commentaries of the Palestinian Talmud (and, more obliquely, the Babylonian Talmud before them)

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9 Genesis 9:24–7.

10 See John Sietze Bergsma, "Noah's Nakedness and the Curse on Canaan (Genesis 9:20–27)," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 124, no 1 (2005): 25–40.

11 On Freud's theory of the primal scene (*Urszene*), which intriguingly never touches on Noah and Ham, see "From the History of an Infantile Neurosis," in *The Wolfman and Other Cases*, trans. Louise Adey Huish (New York: Penguin, 2002), 203–320.

suggest that the etymology of Ham meant "dark," which then produced an ambiguous pun, no less powerful for its linguistic anachronism: "Ham [*ḥam*] went forth darkened [*mefuḥam*]."[12] Whether this darkening was moral or epidermal or both was debated. But by the nineteenth century in the United States, apologists for slavery and even many abolitionists, including a large number of Black clergy, assumed the genealogical conjunction of Ham and Blackness.[13]

In Milton and Marvell's lifetime, this retroactive repurposing of Ham's curse as an origin story for Blackness took place within a culture increasingly looking to justify the enslavement of Black Africans (and sometimes Indigenous peoples in the Americas), though it was still a minority position, and in England it faced significant criticisms from figures like Thomas Browne and Robert Boyle.[14] In book 12 of *Paradise Lost*, the

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[12] I draw on the study of these rabbinical sources in David M. Goldenberg, *The Curse of Ham: Race and Slavery in Early Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 155–6. On the history of confusion over which of Ham's descendants were cursed with Blackness, or if it was Ham himself, see ibid., 168–77; and Steven Jablonski, "Ham's Vicious Race: Slavery and John Milton," *SEL* 37, no. 1 (1997): 179.

[13] See Sylvester A. Johnson, *The Myth of Ham in Nineteenth-Century American Christianity: Race, Heathens, and the People of God* (New York: Palgrave, 2004), 26; and Goldenberg, *Curse of Ham*, 142.

[14] David M. Whitford, *The Curse of Ham in the Early Modern Era: The Bible and the Justifications for Slavery* (London: Routledge, 2009), chap. 4–5. The travel writer George Best influentially linked Ham and Blackness in *A True Discourse of the late voyages of discouerie, for the finding of a passage to Cathaya, by the Northvveast, vnder the conduct of Martin Frobisher Generall* (London, 1578), 31. It was influential in part because it was later incorporated in Richard Hakluyt, *The Principall Navigations, Voiages, Traffiques and Discoueries of the English Nation*, 2nd ed., 3 vols. (London, 1599). For early modern English resistance to taking the Curse of Ham as an etiology of Blackness, see Thomas Browne, *Pseudodoxia Epidemica* (bk. 6, ch. 10–12), in *The Works of Sir Thomas Browne*, ed. Charles Sayle, vol. 2 (Edinburgh: John Grant, 1912), 367–95; and Robert Boyle, "Experiment 11: The Blackness of the Skin, and Hair of Negroes," in *Experiments and Considerations touching Colours* (1664), in *The Works of Robert Boyle*, ed. Michael Hunter and Edward B. Davis, vol. 4 (London: Pickering & Chatto, 1999), 84–93. For insightful analysis of Boyle, see Cristina Malcolmson, *Studies of Skin Color in the Early Royal Society: Boyle, Cavendish, Swift* (New York: Routledge, 2013), especially chap. 1 and 3. John Harpham argues that "through the close of the seventeenth century, the several English travelers to Africa who took up the Curse did so most often as a reason for blackness—and never as a reason for slavery." See "The Intellectual Origins of American Slavery" (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2019), 181. This did not keep the minister John Weemse from making the connection explicit (though he places the curse on Ham himself rather than his descendants): "this curse to be a servant was laid first upon a disobedient sonne Cham, and wee see to this day, that the Moores, Chams posteritie are sold like slaves yet." John Weemse, *The Portraiture of the Image of God in Man* (London, 1627), 279; quoted in Winthrop D. Jordan, *White over Black: American Attitudes Toward the Negro, 1550–1812* (1968; repr., Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013), 62n38. See also Samuel Purchas, *Purchas His Pilgrimes* (London, 1625), 912–13: "The Merchants brought with them many *Negros*; not the worst of their Merchandizes. These they buy of their Parents, some thirty dayes iourney aboue, and on the West side of the Riuer. As the wealth of others consists in multitudes of cattell; so theirs in the multitude of their children, whom they part from with as little passion; neuer after to be seene or heard of: regarding more the price then condition of their slauery. These are descended of *Chus*, the Sonne of cursed *Cham*; as are all of that complexion. Not so by reason of their Seed, nor heat of the Climate: Nor of the Soyle as some haue supposed; for neither haply, will other Races in that Soyle prooue black, nor that Race in other Soyles grow to better complexion: but rather from the curse of *Noe* vpon *Cham* in the Posteritie of *Chus*." On Native Americans as descendants of Ham bound to slavery, and on the supposed scattering of Ham's descendants more generally due to his wandering, see William Strachey, *The Historie of Travel into Virginia Britannia*, ed. R. H. Major (1612; repr., London: Hakluyt Society, 1869), 45–7.

archangel Michael prophetically refers to the curse of Ham as an instance of justifiable servitude, in (blurry) contrast with unjustifiable tyranny:

> Yet sometimes nations will decline so low
> From virtue, which is reason, that no wrong
> But justice and some fatal curse annexed
> Deprives them of their outward liberty,
> Their inward lost: witness th' irreverent son
> Of him who built the ark who for the shame
> Done to his father heard this heavy curse,
> "Servant of servants," on his vicious race.[15]

The cryptic nature of this version of the curse of Ham, which suppresses names and refuses to specify the exact relationship between "justice" and the "curse annexed," has produced considerable recent commentary as the field tries to account for Milton's engagement (or lack of engagement) with the early phases of the transatlantic slave trade.[16] Michael's narrative is causal: nations fall away from virtue—reason—to such an extent that they are justly deprived of outward liberty. By an unnamed agent "some fatal curse" is "annexed" to the justice that produces an outward state of servitude to conform with the unvirtuous inner states of the nation's citizens, and a few lines later this curse is revealed to be, or is at least compared to ("witness"), the curse of Ham. Nyquist has argued that this version of the curse reveals "motivated ambiguity": Milton keeps Michael from specifying who, throughout history, will be subject to the curse of Ham, suggesting that even though Milton would have expected his readers to supply the association of Ham with Africans, the open-endedness has a distinct imperialist advantage.[17] According to Nyquist, the vagueness allows Milton to imagine all the nations that could be subject to just enslavement in his moment and after,

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[15] John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, ed. Gordon Teskey (New York: Norton, 2005), 12.97–104.

[16] See especially Nyquist's *Arbitrary Rule*, 137–47, and Martin Dzelzainis, "'The vulgar only scap'd who stood without': Milton and the Politics of Exclusion," in *Democracy and Anti-democracy in Early Modern England 1603–1689*, ed. Cesare Cuttica and Markku Peltonen (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 239–59. Daniel Shore extends Nyquist's argument for Milton's use of the curse of Ham to justify slavery and white supremacy in "Was Milton White?," *Milton Studies* 62, no. 2 (2020): 252–265. For earlier studies of the curse of Ham in book 12 of *Paradise Lost*, see Maureen Quilligan, "Freedom, Service, and the Trade in Slaves: The Problem of Labor in *Paradise Lost*," in *Subject and Object in Renaissance Culture*, ed. Margreta de Grazia, Maureen Quilligan, and Peter Stallybrass (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 213–34; and Jablonski, "Ham's Vicious Race," 173–90.

[17] Nyquist, *Arbitrary Rule*, 147.

crafting Ham's curse for use not only in the enslavement of Africans but also Indigenous peoples in the Americas and the Irish.

The context and content of Marvell's allusion are quite different from Milton's. Marvell has much less interest in the causality of the curse of Ham, nor is the curse evoked directly to justify servitude, though it does emerge, as Milton's allusion does, at just the moment that tyrannical power has been criticized as constitutively unjust, and obedience to Cromwell is differentiated from tyranny's embrace. Here is how the comparison begins in "The First Anniversary":

> Thou, and thine house, like Noah's eight did rest,
> Left by the wars' flood on the mountain's crest:
> And the large vale lay subject to thy will,
> Which thou but as an husbandman wouldst till:
> And only didst for others plant the vine
> Of liberty, not drunken with its wine.
> That sober liberty which men may have,
> That they enjoy, but more they vainly crave:
> And such as to their parent's tents do press,
> May show their own, not see his nakedness.
> Yet such a Chammish issue still does rage,
> The shame and plague both of the land and age. (283–94)

In this apostrophic analogy, we receive the basic coordinates: as Noah's family was chosen by God to survive the flood, Cromwell and his family were chosen to survive the Civil Wars. Ascribing the flood to manmade "wars" dampens the sense that it was part of a divine plan to reboot the English nation, but the comparison with Noah frames Cromwell as a figure of singular prophetic virtue. His vertical perch above a flood echoes the opening lines of the poem; Cromwell rises above the flood like he does the "watery maze" of time (1).

Beyond that initial comparison, Marvell's adaptation departs from Genesis very quickly. The Noah figure, Cromwell, remains both dressed and sober; it is his children, implicitly intoxicated, who show their asses: "to their parent's tents do press, / May show their own, not see his nakedness." The Ham to Cromwell's Noah here is presumably not one of Cromwell's actual children, alluded to at the opening of the section, but rather the citizens who do not obey the patriarch. Parenthood is rendered

purely metaphorical, and with that figurative transformation, the Genesis plot is inverted: Cromwell is a sober and clothed Noah, but his metaphorical children, in the act of pressing themselves to his tent in order to see him, flash him.[18] In trying to see the Noah figure's shame, they uncover their own.

The syntax of "may show their own, not see his nakedness" shows us Marvell transposing a reversal, to riff on Carey riffing on the title of *Rehearsal Transpros'd* and Marvell's tendency to stage "situations in which an agent finds its actions shooting back upon itself"; the voyeurs turn into exhibitionists.[19] Here, it is as though the figurative Ham shows up to see his drunk, naked father passed out and is somehow transformed into an intoxicated naked spectacle when he finds his father sober and clothed; talk about "the self-defeating reversibility of our actions" catching you with your pants down.[20] A characteristic Marvellian reversal produces a sense of poetic justice. As Nicholas McDowell puts it, this "allows Marvell to reverse the charge of shame made by the radicals against Cromwell."[21] And while, as Derek Hirst and Steven Zwicker claim, the overt argument this allusion is making clearly suggests that "those who would pry into the mysteries of paternal rule disclose private shame," the relationship between Noah's mysteries (drunk, naked) and Cromwell's (horse accident) remains obscure.[22]

And it remains unclear whether there's actually any curse at all in Marvell's version: so much is compressed between "May show their own, not see his nakedness" and "Yet such a Chammish issue still does rage." As the analogy is extended into the present, Ham and the Canaanites seem to get conflated: that "still" (which John Creaser has called the "commonest," most often repeated term in the poem) creates continuity between the ongoing rage of the "Chammish issue" and the Ham figure's nakedness, even as the "ish" in "Chammish" registers a difference between Marvell's contemporary object of criticism and the Canaanites.[23] No curse is explicitly mentioned, so there is

[18] On Marvell's widespread concern with "progenitiveness and descent" and the "toils of patriarchy," see Hirst and Zwicker, *Andrew Marvell, Orphan of the Hurricane*, 41. On the "centrality of children and natality to servitude" in early modern England, and in *Paradise Lost* in particular, see Urvashi Chakravarty, *Fictions of Consent: Slavery, Servitude, and Free Service in Early Modern England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2022), 153.

[19] Carey, "Reversals Transposed," 144. "May show their own, *not* see his nakedness" also tracks with a syntax pattern that, as Annabel Patterson demonstrates, Marvell often uses when he inverts a myth, like in "The Garden," when Marvell's Pan pursues Syrinx "Not as a nymph, but for a reed" (32). See Patterson, *Marvell and the Civic Crown* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), 83.

[20] Carey, "Reversals Transposed," 144.

[21] Nicholas McDowell, "Family Politics; Or, How John Phillips Read His Uncle's Satirical Sonnets (with Transcription from Bodleian MS Rawl. Poet. 30)," *Milton Quarterly* 42, no. 1 (2008): 14.

[22] Hirst and Zwicker, *Andrew Marvell, Orphan of the Hurricane*, 63.

[23] John Creaser, *Milton and the Resources of the Line* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023), 358.

no exact sense in which the state of the Chammish issue is explained by Ham's actions or what the Noah figure utters in response, unless we are to assume that the curse is implied as background to explain the state that makes the sins of voyeurism, shame, and rage possible. In any case, the way that the first syllable in the word "issue" issues directly out of the final one in "Chammish" works to short-circuit any need for causal explanation.

For these reasons—the reversal of who's naked and intoxicated, the elision of the curse and of causality, the focus on rage and shame instead of penal servitude—it would be easy to deduce that Marvell's allusion to the curse of Ham here has nothing to do with slavery and its co-articulation with early modern ideas about race or heritable punishment. And yet, the various images that follow the allusion to the curse of Ham, what Norbrook calls the proliferation of "stock conservative smears" against the Fifth Monarchists and their ilk, hint obliquely at causality and heritability.[24] The sonic drag of the last syllable of "Chammish" into "issue," even if it elides causality, also primes us to think about what follows next, about how the "Chammish issue" slips into what comes after:

> Yet such a Chammish issue still does rage,
> The shame and plague both of the land and age,
> Who watched thy halting, and thy fall deride,
> Rejoicing when thy foot had slipped aside;
> That their new king might the fifth sceptre shake,
> And make the world, by his example, quake:
> Whose frantic army should they want for men
> Might muster heresies, so one were ten.
> What thy misfortune, they the Spirit call,
> And their religion only is to fall.
> Oh Mahomet! now couldst thou rise again,
> Thy falling-sickness should have made thee reign,
> While Feake and Simpson would in many a tome,
> Have writ the comments of thy sacred foam:
> For soon thou mightst have past among their rant

[24] David Norbrook, *Writing the English Republic: Poetry, Rhetoric and Politics, 1627–1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 350.

Were't but for thine unmovèd tulipant;
As thou must needs have owned them of thy band
For Prophecies fit to be Alcoran'd.
 Accursèd locusts, whom your king does spit
Out of the centre of th'unbottomed pit:
Wand'rers, adult'rers, liers, Münzer's rest,
Sorc'rers, atheists, Jesuits, possessed;
You who the scriptures and the laws deface
With the same liberty as points and lace;
Oh race most hypocritically strict!
Bent to reduce us to the ancient pict;
Well may you act the Adam and the Eve;
Ay, and the serpent too that did deceive. (283–320)

Here we have another transposition: the Chammish issue are still conflated with Ham, and become spectators again. They watch and deride Cromwell's fall; now, as if again through poetic justice, "their religion only is to fall." By way of association, what McDowell has described as the demystification of Fifth Monarchists' religion "as a fit" gets related to Muhammad's "falling-sickness."[25] This is in a historical moment that Nabil Matar has described as witnessing the development of "the first anti-Muslim and anti-Arab racism in English thought," a shift away from conceptualizing Muslims in terms of dogmatic difference and toward their more systematic racialization.[26]

[25] McDowell, "Family Politics," 15: "The notion that if Mahomet were to return he would find himself in great demand among the sectaries is taken straight from *Gangraena*," the heresiography by Thomas Edward published in 1646. In an influential reading of the poem, Joad Raymond reminds us that Muhammed "frequently appeared in pamphlets and newspapers as a symbol of irreligion, particularly after the publication of the Koran in English translation in 1649" in "Framing Liberty: Marvell's *First Anniversary* and the Instrument of Government," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 62, no. 3/4 (1999): 334. On that first translation into English, see Noel Malcolm, "The 1649 English Translation of the Koran: Its Origins and Significance," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 75 (2012): 261–95; and Mordechai Feingold, "'The Turkish Alcoran': New Light on the 1649 English Translation of the Koran," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 75, no. 4 (2012): 475–501. More generally, Noel Malcolm demonstrates how various parties during the European Reformation and the English Civil Wars compared their enemies to Muslims in *Useful Enemies: Islam and The Ottoman Empire in Western Political Thought, 1450–1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), especially chap. 4 (on the early Reformation) and 327–30 and 351–4 (on the English Civil Wars).

[26] Nabil Matar, *Islam in Britain, 1558–1685* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 155. The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries also witnessed a more serious and searching study of Islam and Islamic cultures in Europe, as charted by Alexander Bevilacqua, *The Republic of Arabic Letters: Islam and the European Enlightenment* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 2020). *Pace* Matar, Geraldine Heng dates the development of an essentializing anti-Muslim racism earlier, in the moment of the medieval invention of "Saracen" as a term used to classify Muslims with different national and ethnic

The comparisons accumulate. Next is the locusts, mentioned in conjunction with a curse, which implicitly likens the Chammish issue to Egyptians, who were sometimes, in the writings of the Church Fathers, considered as descendants of Ham and thus prone to slavery.[27] (Though locusts are also, of course, a curse or plague against the Egyptians, making this allusion another instance of rebounding self-involution.) The locusts are followed by two lines that just list associations ("Münzer's rest"/"Jesuits, possessed") that seem "spit / Out of the centre of th'unbottomed pit," a swarm (Luther called Müntzer and his followers *Schwärmer*) that issues forth as the dispersal of the Egyptian locusts, themselves issues of the Chammish issue.[28] These issuing locusts are "bent to reduce us to the ancient pict," which re-associates the Fifth Monarchists with Celtic barbarians internally colonized in British history; the English could apparently be "reduce[d]" or drawn back to that state. Holinshed, Spenser, and Milton describe the Picts as "a people mixed of the Scithian and Spanish blood," a racialized resonance Marvell already draws on in "An Horatian Ode," and which continues to be present in the background here even if the explicit focus is their nakedness.[29] By the end of

backgrounds as a single "corporate entity," in *The Invention of Race in the European Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 125; see also Suzanne Conlin Akbari, *Idols in the East: European Representations of Islam and the Orient*, *1100–1450* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012). On the history of Islamophobia's capacity to generate "a supplemental racial dynamic irreducibly to the assignation of color," see Leerom Medovoi, "Dogma-Line Racism: Islamophobia and the Second Axis of Race," *Social Text* 30, no. 2 (2012): 44; and, relatedly, Dennis Austin Britton, *Becoming Christian: Race, Reformation, and Early Modern English Romance* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2014).

[27] See Smith, ed., *Poems*, 296, note to line 311. Smith notes that "locusts" was "a common pejorative term for sectaries in anti-puritan and heresiographical writing: e.g. John Taylor, *The Anatomy of the Separatists* (1642), 2, 'they are like the Egyptian locusts, covering the whole land.'" On the Egyptians and Ham, Origen's *Homily on Genesis* 16.1, from the mid third century C.E., contains the following meditation: "Pharao easily reduced the Egyptian people to bondage to himself, nor is it written that he did this by force. For the Egyptians are prone to a degenerate life and quickly sink to every slavery of the vices. Look at the origin of the race and you will discover that their father Ham, who had laughed at his father's nakedness, deserved a judgment of this kind, that his son Chanaan should be a servant to his brothers, in which case the condition of bondage would prove the wickedness of his conduct. Not without merit, therefore, does the discoloured posterity imitate the ignobility of the race." Origen, *Homilies on Genesis and Exodus*, trans. Ronald E. Heine (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1982), 214–15. Peter Garnsey claims passages like this in the Church Fathers (in addition to Origen, he cites Philo, Basil of Caesarea, and Ambrose) "treat the classic Old Testament enslavement of Canaan and Esau [...] in a way that evokes Aristotle's natural slave theory." See *Ideas of Slavery from Aristotle to Augustine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 46. On how early moderns like Milton inherit the idea of "degeneracy and the loss of virtue" as cause of slavery, see Dzelzainis, "Milton and the Politics of Exclusion," 256. He also helpfully synthesizes some key commentaries from the Church Fathers on the curse of Ham, including Origen's. My thanks to Dzelzainis for recommending Garnsey's *Ideas of Slavery* to me, and corresponding about these texts.

[28] For one of Luther's many vituperative denunciations of Müntzer and the Anabaptist peasant rebels, see "Ein Brief an die Christen zu Straßburg wider den Schwärmergeist" (Nürnberg: Gutknecht, Jobst, 1525), collected in *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesammtausgabe*, vol. 15, ed. Otto Albrecht (Weimar: H. Böhlau, 1899), 391–7.

[29] Raphael Holinshed, *The First and Second Volumes of Chronicles*, rev. ed. (London: John Hooker, Alias Vowell, 1587), 5. On Holinshed, Spenser, and Milton on the Picts, see Stewart Mottram, "The Religious Geography of Marvell's 'An Horatian Ode': Popery, Presbytery, and Parti-Coloured Picts," *The Seventeenth Century* 33, no. 4 (2018): 448–9; on

the passage, a final reversal, where actions rebound on actors: the schismatics act like Adam and Eve, and also the serpent that deceives them.

It might seem like Marvell has moved on from the Chammish issue: he is now churning out ham-fisted, reactionary associations, like so much pork sausage, cohering only insofar as they constitute what Joad Raymond calls "a tissue of allusions to and echoes of contemporary pamphlets and poems," meant to dehumanize the Fifth Monarchists, Ranters, and Quakers from every imaginable angle, with a kind of "knowingness," to use a term from David Simon, that "insulates the self from affective turbulence," here represented by the frenzy of the supposedly possessed.[30] This is perhaps the reason that Norbrook comments that "Marvell's narrative of Noah's curse on Ham in 'The First Anniversary', ll. 286ff, shows no trace of the racial element that would later emerge," even as he carefully and persuasively demonstrates how the poem "reflects the maturing of Cromwell's project for a 'Western Design' which would realise long-standing Parliamentarian demands for raids on Spanish interests in the New World," engaging with "godly globalization" and therefore with the slave trade that increasingly

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Marvell's framing, in "An Horatian Ode," of the Pict as "Spenser's Scythian stereotype," see ibid., 449–50; and on how this "morphs" in "First Anniversary" into an emphasis on "native primitivism," see ibid., 453–4. The Pict appears in lines 105–12 of "An Horatian Ode." Nigel Smith draws our attention to the Latin etymology of the term in *picti*, meaning painted (because the Pict supposedly wore nothing but blue body paint), which further underscores the traces of racialization in this reference already obvious from Holinshed's comment about mixed Scythian and Spanish blood. See Smith, ed., *Poems*, 278n105. On the relationship between ink, tattooing, and race in the early modern imaginary, see Miles Grier, "Inkface: The Slave Stigma in England's Early Imperial Imagination," in *Scripturalizing the Human: The Written as Political*, ed. Vincent L. Wimbush (New York: Routledge, 2015), 193–220, especially 206–9 on Picts, where Grier analyzes Thomas Harriott's comparison of the Picts to Algonkians, the Indigenous "tattooed savage" constructed "in the service of reinventing a shameful English identity" (206). On Spenser and the Pict, see also Richard A. McCabe, *Spenser's Monstrous Regiment: Elizabethan Ireland and the Poetics of Difference* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 142–64; and, on the Pict more generally, Michael Hecter, *Internal Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development* (London: Routledge, 1998). On the "Spanish race" and the role that concept played in the English construction of the Irish and the Pict, see Barbara Fuchs, "Spanish Lessons: Spenser and the Irish Moriscos," *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900* 42, no. 1 (2002): 43–62; and on Spanish "Blackness" and "Moorishness" more generally, see Fuchs, "The Spanish Race," in *Rereading the Black Legend: The Discourse of Religious and Racial Difference in the Renaissance Empires*, ed. Margaret R. Greer, Walter D. Mignolo, and Maureen Quilligan (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 88–98.

[30] Raymond, "Framing Liberty," 317 (Raymond is referring to the disjointed coherence of the whole poem, but the *concordia discors* he explores becomes particularly acute—maybe even sliding into discordance—in the polemic against the Fifth Monarchists); and David Simon, "Knowingness and Eros: Andrew Marvell's 'Last Instructions to a Painter,'" in *Imagining Andrew Marvell at 400*, 218. One of the anonymous reviewers of this article helpfully suggested that Marvell's mishmash of insults here fits in an English literary tradition of consistently rendering threats to social order "through seemingly scattershot expressions of difference" that converge in a vision of British supremacy; an earlier example would be Ben Jonson's masques, many of which together, as Kristen McDermott demonstrates, cohere as a collage of racializations. See McDermott, introduction to *Masques of Difference: Four Court Masques by Ben Jonson*, ed. Kristen McDermott (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), 1–79.

motored it.[31] And yet these much more explicitly racialized associations issue out from the "Chammish issue," itself self-consciously associational, even if they go backward and forward in time. The fact that Origen and other Church Fathers claim Egyptians as the descendants of Ham suggests there may be a racialized logic that connects the "Chammish issue" to the "accursed locusts," and all the other references are spit forth as the locusts that emerge from the pit. The connective tissue that weaves together the ostensibly paratactic fabric of the passage suggests that Marvell's Chammish issue might actually show such traces of the racial element Norbrook suggests we do not find here, even if any explicit racialization of Ham's lineage is elided as neatly as the curse itself is.

In this sense, the curse of Ham seems to offer a framework for describing these zealous radicals as a "race most hypocritically strict"—a group that has inherited or been ascribed a collective identity and a curse that, in some sense, racializes them.[32] The references to Muhammad, the implicitly Egyptian locusts, the ancient Pict—these underscore the way that race becomes a tool for marking specific groups, here the "Chammish issue," as inherently incapable of being integrated into the state.

And it is a poem that cares a great deal about integration. Earlier in "The First Anniversary," Marvell proposes, in his revision of *Areopagitica*'s "Temple of the Lord" metaphor, that, when it comes to the structure of the church-state under Cromwell, "the resistance of opposèd minds, / The fabric as with arches stronger binds" (95–6).[33] Marvell reconstructs Milton's metaphor to emphasize what Philip Connell calls "dynamic structural unity," a state of binding harmony that Milton declared both impossible and undesirable in civil and spiritual architecture.[34] But not here, not with the Fifth Monarchists, where we find a limit case to church-state integration, which poses a different kind of threat than the Catholic one that Marvell renders as external to the state, "the monster" that Cromwell, through Protestant imperial war, "alone / Pursues … thorough every throne" (127–8).

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31 Norbrook, "Marvell, Globalisation, and Slavery," 97n44, 98–9. For a study of Cromwell's design as a transformation of England's relationship to the rest of the world, see Carla Gardina Pestana, *The English Conquest of Jamaica: Oliver Cromwell's Bid for Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 2017).

32 On the evolving significance of "race" as a term of classification in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, see Margo Hendricks, "Race: A Renaissance Category?" in *A Companion to English Renaissance Literature and Culture*, ed. Michael Hattaway (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2002), 690–8.

33 John Milton, *Areopagitica*, in *Complete Prose Works*, vol. 2, ed. Ernest Sirluck (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953), 555.

34 Philip Connell, "Marvell, Milton and the Protectoral Church Settlement," *The Review of English Studies* 62, no. 256 (2011): 578.

It was in that earlier moment of the poem, which emphasizes Cromwell's orchestration of the common-wealth's "contignation," that Marvell introduces the idea that the natures of specific kinds of people lead them to act in specific ways:

> The common-wealth does through their centres all
> Draw the circumf'rence of the public wall;
> The crossest spirits here do take their part,
> Fast'ning the contignation which they thwart;
> And they, whose nature leads them to divide,
> Uphold, this one, and that the other side;
> But the most equal still sustain the height,
> And they as pillars keep the work upright;
> While the resistance of opposèd minds,
> The fabric as with arches stronger binds,
> Which on the basis of a senate free,
> Knit by the roof's protecting weight agree. (87–98)

"The crossest spirits here do take their part" implies a role that correlates spiritual type to action. This proposal that spiritual ontology determines action expands into the idea of a "nature" that "leads" these crossest spirits "to divide." Yet there is again a reversal or rebounding here: their nature leads them to divide and thwart, but the "part" the state sets for them thwarts their thwarting, inverting their intended actions so that the effect is architecturally constructive, and literally conservative. They think they "divide," but the enjambment reminds them they "uphold," the movement down a line registering a shift to "up," its opposite. Rhyme does similar work: "divide" is united by rhyme to be on the same side as "side," making "this one" and "the other side" almost indistinguishable.

But while Marvell seems serenely confident here that the actions of the "crossest spirits" can be recuperated and bound within the fabric of the church-state, the racialized satire of the Fifth Monarchists that emerges later seems almost panicked in its diversity of references, by contrast, suggesting that sectarians pose a threat that cannot be so easily woven into Cromwell's unity. Marvell may not call for war against the Fifth Monarchists in the way he does against Catholics in other kingdoms, turning "from swords to words" in these satirical lines, but there is no sense that Fifth Monarchists can be easily harmonized with Cromwell and the Protectorate constitution.

The rhyme of "Münzer's rest" with "Jesuits, possessed" may actually imply that it is more difficult to disaggregate internal Protestant enemies to the state like the Fifth Monarchists from the external Catholic enemies that are highlighted as targets of just imperial war.[35] Connell argues that the section depicting Cromwell's spiritual and civic architecture witnesses "Marvell's tightly woven couplets both describ[ing] and enact[ing]" integration "into the harmonious constitutional structures of the Protectorate."[36] But this feels less true of the Fifth Monarchist satire, where couplets like "rant" / "tulipant" and "Münzer's rest" / "Jesuits, possessed" could be read as sounding out the incoherence of racialization (the jarring conflation of Anabaptists, Jesuits, Fifth Monarchists, Ranters and Muslims) as easily as imposing coherence.

Racialization often imposes coherence incoherently.[37] Race enters into "The First Anniversary" at the moment Marvell locates a level of resistance to the state structure that cannot be recuperated as a binding agent, and it classifies particular types whose nature causes them to act in specific ways. What is racialized is the "rest," whether that be Müntzer's or Muhammed's. Marvell's allusion to the curse of Ham and the list of conservative dismissals that follow bind together the modes of causality found in both natural and penal theories of slavery.[38] Though servitude and slavery are repressed in the allusion to the curse, there are two theories of causality working in the background here: the "Chammish issue" may live out a curse that makes them act in these supposedly shameful ways, and it is also their racialized "nature" that leads them to oppose the "contignation" so extremely that they cannot play a part in upholding it.

At the same time, the logic of the curse of Ham, which could construe racialization as a kind of penal capture of future generations and a fixing of group identity, seems to be in tension with the frenzied proliferation of references here, as well as Marvell's inclination to reversal and, relatedly, his tendency to elide causality. The ambiguities that Marvell introduces into his version of the curse of Ham are different from what Nyquist has called, in her reading of the passage from book 12 of *Paradise Lost* cited earlier, Milton's "motivated ambiguity" in leaving unspecified which future peoples will be subject to the curse and so justifiably enslaved.[39] This is largely because Marvell

[35] The claim that Marvell differentiates clearly between Catholic and Protestant threats, reserving swords for the former and only words for the latter, is in Mottram, "Religious Geography of 'An Horatian Ode,'" 454.

[36] Connell, "Marvell, Milton, and the Protectoral Church Settlement," 578.

[37] See also Patricia Akhimie's claim that "the power of race is its slipperiness," in *Shakespeare and the Cultivation of Difference: Race and Conduct in the Early Modern World* (New York: Routledge, 2018), 10; and, more generally, Stuart Hall, "Race, the Floating Signifier: What More Is There to Say about 'Race'?," in *Selected Writings on Race and Difference*, ed. Paul Gilroy and Ruth Wilson Gilmore (Durham: Duke University Press, 2021), 359–73.

[38] On natural versus penal theories of slavery in Milton, see Nyquist, *Arbitrary Rule*, chap. 4.

[39] Nyquist, *Arbitrary Rule*, 147.

elides the curse and enslavement from this passage. That does not let Marvell off the hook, however; he seems invested in an expansive, if scattershot application of the "Chammish" label as an instrument of maintaining a racialized social order. But a Chammish classification that flips the script, represses the curse of servitude entirely, and issues into a swarm of reactionary insults cannot exactly do the work of racializing servitude that the curse of Ham increasingly did in the period.

It is Marvell's curse to play both sides: to participate in the racialization of the curse of Ham, and also to turn it on its head.

Competing Interests

The author has no competing interests to declare.

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