

of the period. Whilst Wanklyn's book contains some omissions that may have proved valuable to his current "British" approach, the work is meticulously researched, and his reassessments of leading protagonists raise a variety of research questions for generations to come.

Imtiaz Habib. *Black Lives in the English Archives, 1500-1677*. Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2008. ix+415 pp. Hardcover \$99.95. Review by BABACAR M'BAYE, KENT STATE UNIVERSITY.

Imtiaz Habib's *Black Lives in the English Archives, 1500-1677* is an ambitious and meticulous study of the African presence in Britain from the reign of King Henry VII to that of Charles II. The book is a result of many arduous years of meticulous collection and analysis of "scattered, fragmented, and historically disregarded records of black people [in England] for four centuries back" (ix). From this painstaking endeavor, Habib has produced a brilliant monograph that successfully writes the contributions of Africans into an early history of England in which they have been considered as "absent" and "invisible." Challenging past and current scholarship about England's history, Habib reconstructs black presence and visibility in this history during the reigns of many Tudors and Stuarts.

Habib's attempt to establish the presence of blacks in early modern England fits into the effort of many scholars to uncover the neglected role of these blacks in British history. One of these scholars is Peter Fryer whom Habib praises for having provided us with primary "empiricism" about "historical black people in England in the later seventeenth century" (9). In a similar vein, Elizabeth Kowaleski Wallace's book, *The British Slave Trade and Public Memory* (2006), represents Fryer's *Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain* (1984) as a work which, like Walvin's *Black Ivory: A History of British Slavery* (1992), attempts "to counteract the removal of traces of black life from the British past, by way of ensuring that black people are part of the British future" (8). Habib makes unique contributions to this scholarship which is still "in infancy" by tracing the origins of blacks in England to the Tudor and Stuart years from which essentialist and construc-

tionist approaches to history have removed them in an attempt to relegate them “into the unknowable” (9). Resisting this ideological refutation of factuality, Habib uses poststructural philosophy as well as postcolonial theory in order to enable “the visibility and historical impress of black people” in early modern England through archival sources such as cryptic parish records, “arcane legal testimony, and casual household inventory listing” (11). Habib classifies his materials in a ninety-five page index-section containing the three following categories:

(a) government records, (b) personal references, and (c) parochial church notations. The first type includes monarchic promulgations, government accounts, law cases, and national chronicles mentioning black people. The second comprises descriptions of, and allusions to, black people in letters, household accounts, and diaries and personal papers. The third constitutes entries in local parochial church registers and ecclesiastical courts, documenting the christening, marriage, and deaths of black people in that neighborhood, including wills made by them or mentioning them. (16)

Habib’s purpose in collecting and organizing such archival data is to correct and disprove the conservative representation of black life in English history as “unknowable.” By studying the meaning of these sources in fluid contexts during which terms such as “blackamoore,” “moor” “Blackmoore,” “Blackemer,” “negus,” “morian,” and “blackman” were frequently used in England, Habib wants to counter the “assumptions of traditional early modern history that have made black people in Tudor and Stuart England absent by default” (17). Criticizing this historiography, Habib suggests the scholarly importance of an early history of British “racial naming[s] [which] proceeds not from the fixity of essence but from its very ambiguity” (12).

Another great asset of Habib’s book is its groundbreaking methodology which begins with a refutation of certain key paradigms of both past and current scholarship about blacks in English history. First, Habib argues that “early modern black people are untraceable in the work” of such numerous scholars as the social historians Lawrence Stone and Peter Laslett, literary scholars Louis Wright, Samuel Schoenbaum, and G.K. Hunter, and traditional and poststructuralist

scholars Linda Yungblut and Patricia Fumerton for whom “black communities have not comprised an analytical category” (7). While he acknowledges the efforts of later works such as those of W.E. Miller, Eldred Jones, and Robert Fleissner, which attempt to provide “Empirical Elizabethan knowledge of black people,” Habib says that such studies are problematic because they are “spotty, diffuse, and generally ineffective” in their findings (8). Though he also recognizes the contributions of social historians such as Folarin Shyllon, Paul Edwards, James Walvin, Peter Fryer, and St. Clair Drake for their use of “documentary evidence” in the study of the slave trade, Habib contends with these scholars’ focus on the more known period of the second half of the seventeenth century and derides their consideration of “historical blacks in the England of [Queen] Elizabeth and her immediate successors” as just “a minor and occasional presence in their data” (11). In the same vein, Habib gives credit to scholars such as David Dabydeen, Ruth Cowhig, Elliott Tokson, Anthony Gerard Barthelemy, and Jack D’Amico for “importantly foregrounding race and blackness as neglected topoi in Elizabethan and Jacobean literary studies” (8). Yet he criticizes these scholars for having “occluded the materiality and consequent historical import of the black presence in the earlier centuries of the English early modern age” (8).

Writing against past and current scholarly practices, Habib thus demonstrates the historical and material significance of blackness in early modern England by paying attention to subtle dynamics that resulted from the first migrations of blacks into England. As he suggests, the incoming of blacks in early Tudor England resulted from two processes which were “first their introduction to England through the Africans in Catherine of Aragon’s retinue and, under the aegis of cordial Anglo-Spanish relations that it both reflected and ushered in, work relocations of skilled black people to England . . . and, second the small trickle of Africans brought back by English merchants trading with the Iberian peninsula” (63). Habib gives the example of the 1501 arrival in England of two slaves who followed the Spanish princess Catherine of Wales. According to Habib, “these first black arrivals” were “mentioned casually in a letter of Ferdinand and Isabella to De Puebla, their ambassador in England” as part of the “personnel” the princess was taking with her to England (23). As Habib points

out, the two “black figures” were at the bottom of a list of “maids of honour,” “high female companions, and attendants” who “are for that reason in all probability female, [and] are proud advertisements of an ambitious Christian Spain’s recent imperial achievements” (23). Giving further meaning to this example, Habib writes: “This political history, which positions the two slaves as fitting accoutrements for a Spanish princess in her future foreign home, makes their black identity almost a certainty. This certainty is bolstered by the fact that since 1459 the word ‘slave’ (‘escravo’) in common Portuguese usage primarily if not exclusively denotes a black African” (23).

Another compelling evidence of the black presence in early modern England that Habib gives comes from the mid-to-late sixteenth century when the arrival of Africans in Britain exclusively resulted from “England’s expeditionary forays to Africa and the Western Atlantic in search of new commodities and markets” (63). Therefore, like the first phases of black migrations to England, the later ones occurred within political and historical contexts that shaped the materiality of Africans by transforming these people into workers that produced wealth for the English monarchy and empire without being publicly acknowledged as “present” in a nation that preferred to see itself as white only. Furthermore, by the late sixteenth century, the Africans in London suffered “cultural suppression and political and legal effacement,” “‘obsessional’ surveillance,” as well as “collective xenophobia about aliens,” which rendered them “an obviously disadvantaged group” (118). By the mid-seventeenth century, the victimization of blacks in London had spread to the counties outside of the city as a result of competitions between small merchants who greatly benefited from business practices and living habits which included “the acquisition of black people” (195).

It would be unfair to assess *Black Lives in the English Archives* without acknowledging the efficiency of its interdisciplinary methodology that allows Habib to theorize the notion of “community of color” beyond ethnic boundaries. For instance, early in the book, Habib suggests the broad meaning that the term “black” had in early modern England as a “typological identifier” of “a loose category of the non-white, non-English (as distinct from white but non-English people)” (1). This information is crucial because it suggests that the term “black”

in early England could have signified “Negro,” “Ethiopian,” “moor,” “blackamoor,” “barbaree,” “barbaryen,” or “Indian” (1). Habib also suggests the plural meaning of the term “black” in the first chapter of his book where he discusses thirty records of Indians, Americans, and other people of color that he found in different parts of England, suggesting new ground for research on the history of East Indians and Americans in early modern England (239).

Black Lives in the English Archives is a major book that any serious scholar of early Atlantic history and cultures must have, since it suggests the complex roles that blacks had in England from 1500 to 1677. The book covers almost two centuries during which blacks were hidden in a British society that used them as commodities and vestiges of monarchy and imperial grandeur without shielding them from the abuses of xenophobia, imperialism, and slavery. In addition, the book reveals the presence of blacks in English archives ranging from 1500 to 1677, giving modern scholars an invaluable means for studying the social, political, and economic significance of black migrations to England in new and pluralistic terms that broaden the meaning of color and caste in early Atlantic studies.

Kevin Sharpe. *Image Wars: Promoting Kings and Commonwealth in England, 1603-1660*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010. xvii + 665 pp. \$55.00. Review by TILLMAN W. NECHTMAN, SKIDMORE COLLEGE.

Kevin Sharpe’s *Image Wars: Promoting Kings and Commonwealth in England, 1603-1660* is the second in a three-volume series in which the author plans “to turn attention to the changes in the modes and media representing rule and of the relationship of such representatives to perceptions of rule” (xvi). As in his earlier volume, *Selling the Tudor Monarchy*, Sharpe insists that early-modern governments—like those we know today—“had to project images which subjects found appealing in order to secure support for their authority and policies” (xiv). In some ways, then, Sharpe’s trilogy is an early history of political messaging, a pre-history of what those of us accustomed to the twenty-four hour news cycle have come to call “spin.”