

of a New England mind by 1700 in the sphere of religious commitment” (231).

While New England became more English over the course of the seventeenth century, it also became more inclusive through the creation of covenantal confessions according to Weir. Based on an appraisal of one church confession, the “Manifesto” of the Brattle Street Congregational Church in Boston, the author asserts that a “new era” emerged in New England with the “explicit expansion of voting membership to females” in the church. New England moved away “from patriarchal foundation cohorts to a pattern of mixed cohorts of men and women”; the Manifesto is evidence of the “silent shift toward the greater and more active participation of women in the affairs of New England churches” (218). Increased activity by women in the Congregational Church, however, occurred in large degree because of the feminization of membership by the end of the seventeenth century. As female members became more prevalent than male members, a congregation’s survival depended on women’s involvement. This has been clearly demonstrated in the literature on the feminization of church membership by scholars such as Gerald Moran, Richard Shiels, Cedric Cowing, Amanda Porterfield, Stephen Grossbart, Barbara Lacey, Harry Stout and Catherine Brekus, and Carolyn Lawes—a literature not cited by the author. Female dominance in church membership does not necessarily translate into increased power or influence.

Weir’s knowledge and elaboration of covenantal theology and history of New England is deep and persuasive and this work provides a comprehensive overview of covenants in early New England. This publication will be a foundational resource for scholars and students interested in the history of covenants, both civil and ecclesiastical. The bibliographical essay in particular will serve as a useful reference guide on all available sources relating to political and religious covenants in New England colonies during the seventeenth century.

Virginia Mason Vaughan. *Performing Blackness on English Stages, 1500-1800*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005. 186 pp. + 10 illus. \$75.00. Review by NANCY M. BUNKER, MACON STATE COLLEGE.

Virginia Mason Vaughan's *Performing Blackness on English Stages, 1500-1800* investigates impersonations of black Africans by early modern English actors. Focus on performance distinguishes Vaughan's study; she argues that the acting out of blackness, repeated over time, contributed to English audiences' construction of racial difference. She describes the theatrical experience as "overlapping and colluding with a host of social and economic pressures, [which] shaped the growth of England's slave economy" (xii). Her convincing readings of canonical and non-canonical plays show theatre's reflection of shifting social and historical contexts.

In "Preliminaries," chapter one, Vaughan asserts that blackness signified otherness, and thought in the Middle Ages assigned moral and religious significance to black as evil and shaped personhood in early modern England. Although white actors playing blackface roles undercut the proverbial expression, it is "impossible to wash an Ethiop (or blackamoor) white" (6), the stereotype existed. The "cues in the text that indicate the actor blackened his face in order to perform a particular role" (5) take Vaughan's focus. Repetitive performance patterns in multiple plays and across centuries, she argues, must be understood as the "projections of imaginations" (5) by white authors for white audiences even as blackface became "increasingly complicated by inchoate conceptions of race" (8). An illuminating discussion of skin coloration techniques such as burning cork into powder reveals the "best black" was derived from manufacturing a powder originating in white ivory; this product mirrors characterization of black stage figures i.e., "blackness is not an originary state but the result of turning white into black" (11).

Chapter two sets out "Patterns of Blackness" that circulated in medieval Europe. Vaughan deals first with medieval mystery cycle plays that ascribed black skin and damnation to Lucifer whose dark face marks a transformation from inclusion of God's whiteness to exclusion from "believers" (21). Including Moors in featuring exotic worlds at Queen Elizabeth's coronation underscored the monarch's role as these figures in urban processions "connoted misrule" (29) and threatened community order. The blackface character "symbolically enacted the colonizing myth that king and merchants could control and transform the darkened aliens beyond England's shores" when removing skin coloring and turning white (33).

“Talking Devils,” chapter three, examines the black characters first portrayed on the 1580s and 1590s public stage and the creation of a new villain type. The actor’s new authority as a speaking character complicates blackness and exhibits a shift from display to performance. Three roles characterize the change. The first Black Moor character with a speaking role, Muly Mahmet in *The Battle of Alcazar* (1587) portrays a complex blackness. He had a mastery of the English language, historical person identity, and a loving wife. Mahmet inverts the stereotype, but his lack of heroism on the battlefield, and cursing his black mother as the source of his troubles diminish his stature. Aaron in *Titus Andronicus* (1594), attempts to protect his child before being a “demonized scapegoat” (50) immobilized into the earth. Eleazar obtains power through a sexual relationship with a royal white woman in *Lust’s Dominion, or The Lascivious Queen* (1599/1600) and acts upon righteous revenge, but must die to “exorcize anxieties” (56) of biracial offspring. Vaughn closes with a key point: each play’s final scene focuses on a once active and now immobilized black body.

Black “Kings and Queens” were recognized figures on stage, and their performance contributed to the English conviction that their country was “a world divided from the world” (73), according to Vaughan’s chapter four. The portrait of Abed el-Ouahed ben Messaoud be Mohammed Anoun, ambassador to Elizabeth from Morocco after the defeat of the Spanish Armada, links to Moorish royalty stage representation. *The Merchant of Venice’s* Prince of Morocco, Porus in *The Blind Beggar of Alexandria* (1598), and Mulymumen in *All Lost by Lust* (1619) wear tawny or black skin that determines their lack of success. Vaughan reads exploration and trade issues in *The Triumph of Truth* (1613) and distancing of London from all the world in Africa’s subjugation visually represented in Abraham Ortelius’s *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* (1613). Queen Anne wearing black pigment in the *Masque of Blackness* (1605), although she did not speak, asserted her presence in a “politically symbolic social season” (67).

Chapter five, “Bedtrick,” explores the blackfaced Moor as trickster and more often the substitute bed partner. Created and performed during the early seventeenth century, the plays discussed speak to increased mercantilism and connote English “fears and fantasies of sexual pollution” (75). The author meticulously analyzes seven bedtricks and argues that the “marginalized” black body of the bedtrick exposes “cross-racial sexuality as an exotic ele-

ment that was simultaneously attractive and forbidden;” furthermore, “early modern English attitudes toward female sexuality were entwined with emerging notions of racial difference” (92).

Vaughan extends her *Othello* scholarship in chapter six, “Shakespeare’s Moor of Venice,” by concentrating on the dynamics of blackface impersonation; she foregrounds textual description of Othello’s blackness and the language of “exotic geographical otherness” (95). Her study situates Othello within theatrical conventions of early modern performance but shows him neither a devil nor a natural fool, a servant of the state although a military leader, and enmeshed in sexual suspicions without a bedtrick. The chapter surveys Othello’s blackface performances from the Restoration to twentieth century, culminating with Sir Laurence Olivier’s 1964-65 controversial representation. Critical material from memoirs, anecdotes, reviews, theatre history, and biography weave intertextual portraits even as Vaughan argues that audiences’ fascination with the Moor was the “pleasure of seeing a white actor personate a black man and knowing this is what he or she is seeing” (97). Her discussion of black actors’ Othello performance cautions that restricting actors in this way is a “more subtle racism” than early modern primitivism (104).

“Europeans disguised as Black Moors,” chapter seven, interrogates the practice in late Jacobean and Caroline theatre for characters to blacken their faces when the audience knows they are really white. Vaughan explicates *The White Devil* (1612) and several non-canonical plays including *The Parliament of Love* (1624), *The Lost Lady* (1638), and *The Fatal Contract* (1638-39) performed at indoor playing houses for elite audiences who apparently relished the sexual intrigues that could be complicated by blackface disguise. She suggests their faces insure a “kind of invisibility while participating in complicated sexual intrigues” and may speak to concerns that black servants may be able to permeate racial boundaries in aristocratic households (110).

Chapter eight’s “Avenging Villains” examines three adaptations of earlier tragedies reworked for Restoration audiences: Elkanah Settle’s *Love and Revenge* (1675), Aphra Behn’s *Abdelazer: The Moor’s Revenge* (1676), and Edward Ravenscroft’s *Titus Andronicus* (1678). A growing colonial empire and thriving slave trade meant a black face was no longer a spectacle (131). These playwrights attributed more humanity to the black villain figures, characterized them with “emotions and motivations” (133), “granted more agency” (136)

than in the original plays; the endings were altered to reveal complex persons whose biological compatibility with white women signified racial pollution and threatened the body politic.

Chapter nine examines two of the longest playing and most popular tragedies of the eighteenth century: Thomas Southerne's *Oroonoko* and Edward Young's *The Revenge*. These "Royal Slaves," sons of African kings "cast as grandly heroic, even sublime" aroused audience pity (149). Possibly, these stage performances piqued consciences to unjust slave practices.

Vaughn's chapter ten, "Afterthoughts" speaks to political and racial ramifications of white and black actors playing black roles; her closing remarks advocate flexibility in today's theatrical productions. *Performing Blackness on English Stages 1500-1800* expertly argues drama's crucial role as both a "receptor and a creator of racial attitudes in the early modern period" (17). Exceptional illustrations enrich the engaging and readable chapters. Vaughn's study undeniably provides a wealth of knowledge for theatre historians, literary critics, and scholars of "whiteness studies."

Gary Kuchar. *Divine Subjection: The Rhetoric of Sacramental Devotion in Early Modern England*. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2005. xii + 297 pp. \$58.00. Review by KATE NARVESON, LUTHER COLLEGE.

Defining devotion as an act that alters the way a believer interprets affliction, Gary Kuchar argues in *Divine Subjection* that early modern devotion taught readers "how to experience themselves as properly desiring subjects" (2). Devotion, therefore, involves a rhetoric, "a formal means of arousing readers," which Kuchar analyzes in relation to psychoanalytic approaches to the creation of the subject. Devoting chapters to Southwell, Crashaw, Donne, and Traherne, he attends in particular to the way their devotional writing responded to desacramentalizing forces, whether Protestant critiques of Roman Catholic and Laudian "sacramentality" or scientific claims about the body. Kuchar's use of "sacramental devotion" thus refers not to devotion involving the sacraments of the church but to something like devotion predicated on a sense of "the sacred." He draws on the work of C. John Sommerville and Debora Shuger, seeing a "sacramental" devotion as one that conceives a "communicable and hence recognizable continuity among