

Abstracts and Bios
Christianity and Racemaking in the Early Modern Atlantic World
13th and 14th September 2023, King's College London

KEYNOTE: Heather Miyano Kopelson, Hierarchies of difference: religion and making race in the early modern Atlantic world

Bio: Heather Miyano Kopelson is Associate Professor of History and Affiliated Faculty in Gender and Race Studies at the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa.

Danielle Terrazas Williams, "Their Superior": Father General Claudio Acquaviva, Racialized Tropes, and the Evangelization of Black people in the Provincia Mexicana

Abstract: By royal decree on October 25, 1538, King Charles I of Spain ordered that enslaved "negros and mulatos" in Mexico be instructed in the realm's religion. In a 1583 annual report from the Jesuit residence in Veracruz, members highlighted their efforts in the Crown's cause, writing: "Black people (and there are many here) have joined together in a church on Sundays and feast days, and before the mass begins, one of us teaches them the Christian doctrine; and in the mass they are [taught] the gospel." The Jesuits underscored their dedication to this work by noting that the newly gathered flock had "potential," demonstrated "great devotion," and did "not appear so notably sinful like before." This paper aims to illuminate the praxis of racialized evangelization through the strategies employed by the Society of Jesus in colonial Mexico and examine the influence of the rhetoric of one of the most prominent leaders of the order, Claudio Acquaviva. As the fifth Superior General, serving from February 19, 1581 to January 31, 1615, Acquaviva's legacy includes ushering in the "Golden Age" of the Society. Even with the task of leading a globalizing order, the Superior General paid particular attention to Mexico and to its burgeoning demographic of Black people, both free and enslaved. Through an examination of annual reports and circulated "treatises," I explore the rhetoric of a mission shaped by the conditions of slavery and freedom and analyze the racialized tropes that guided the dictates of Jesuit leaders.

Bio: Danielle Terrazas Williams is an associate professor in the School of History at the University of Leeds. Her work examines how Spanish American institutions imagined marginalized people and how race and gender influenced the ways in which people navigated imperial demands and religious expectations. Her first book, *The Capital of Free Women: Race, Legitimacy, and Liberty in Colonial Mexico* (Yale University Press, 2022), challenges traditional narratives of racial hierarchies and gendered mobility by focusing on African-descended women. Danielle's current book project analyzes the strategies employed by Jesuits as they began to engage with free and enslaved African people in Mexico.

Bethan Fisk, *Spiritual Administration on the Mines of the Black Pacific*

Abstract: There has been relatively little analysis of spiritual administration to enslaved black people in the gold mining camps of the Pacific tropical lowlands of New Granada (eighteenth-century Colombia). In the cities of the Pacific, people of African descent had long engaged deeply with Catholicism by the early eighteenth century. On the mines, black people had a distinct experience of religious instruction, sacramental inclusion, and new place-based engagements with Catholicism. This paper examines the administration of spiritual pasture, the instruction and receipt of the sacraments, to enslaved people in Pacific New Granada from the 1720s to the 1770s. It explores the religious organisation and instruction in the rural Pacific, which was entangled with that of indigenous people. The focus is on two controversies, first, the financing of spiritual pasture—the conflict between the bishops and mine owners over payment of clergy for administering to bondspersons on the mines—and second, controversy over the lack of observance of holy days. For the bishops, enslaved people lived in “spiritual abandonment” for enslavers failed to educate them in Christianity, and they continued to mine for gold for themselves on days supposed to be for rest and devotion. For owners of bondspersons and mines, enslaved people labouring on holy days ensured the stability of slavery, and indeed made operations of ownership of mines and bondspersons far cheaper. Bondspeople spent this free time either drinking and dancing as respite from their daily toil, or from panning for gold to purchase freedom for themselves and their kin.

Bio: Bethan Fisk is a lecturer in colonial Latin American history and Leverhulme Early Career Fellow in the Department of Hispanic, Portuguese, and Latin American Studies at the University of Bristol. My research focuses on black knowledge and cultural geographies in New Granada (Colombia) and the Caribbean. My teaching explores black and indigenous knowledge production, slavery, and religion in Spanish America and the early modern world. Her book manuscript “Between Waters and Forests: Black Religious Geographies of Eighteenth-Century Colombia,” the first full-length study on African-descended religion in New Granada, examines how place shaped religious practice and is currently under review.

Eduardo Dawson, *Africans and the Catholic sacraments: Marriages petitions in 17th century Lima*

Abstract: In my current dissertation research, I aim to gain further insights into the social experiences and psychological patterns of the enslaved African cohort in colonial Latin America. I ask, how did Africans who were brought to Cartagena de Indias and Lima, Peru from 1535-1650 respond to Christianity? What responses can be deemed as performative Christianity, or what evidence exists of an internalized or emotionally committed Christianity? How, if at all, did newly arrived Africans’ reception of Christianity affect their political allegiance and their relationships with secular authorities? I will present on African marriage petitions sent to the ecclesiastical court in Lima from 1560-1650. The marriage petitions I examine detail owners who determined to sell a married enslaved man or woman to a master geographically removed from the spouse. The dissenting partner took up legal claim against the master, requesting that their spouse not be sent away so that the two might carry out marriage life as defined by Church canons and colonial statutes. Beyond this experience, Africans often requested more time with their

counterparts and desired that a particular place be assigned to allow them to consummate the marital bond. In many cases, a husband or wife requested that their permitted visits be increased from Saturdays and Sundays to every day of the week. In these cases, the litigant suggested that the increased visitation strengthened their service to God and bolstered their obligations before the state. I hope to explore how these events reified the Christian development of enslaved Africans by indicating their allegiance to the Catholic sacraments.

Bio: Eduardo Dawson is currently a doctoral candidate at the University of Notre Dame where he studies the 16-17th century Spanish Empire. He focuses on the Catholic Church as a wing of empire and its involvement with the African subjects who arrived in Cartagena de Indias and were later sent to Lima, Peru. Dawson's dissertation focuses on the long process of African conversion that resulted after initial catechesis and baptism and was later evidenced by marriage unions and eucharist devotion that took place in religious confraternities. His presentation takes from a dissertation chapter on marriage petitions that Africans filed in Lima's ecclesiastical court during the first half of the 17th century.

Domitille de Gavrilloff, A Visible Sign of an Invisible Race: the Administration of the Marriage Sacrament in the French Caribbean (17th & 18th centuries) as a Racial Marker

Abstract: In the French Caribbean colonies, evangelization transformed the practice of slavery: by imposing the baptism of enslaved Africans and encouraging their access to other sacraments, the Church promoted their inclusion in the Christian community. Essential in the Economy of Salvation, a “visible sign of an invisible grace” (St Augustine), a sacrament’s efficiency depends upon its administration in compliance with canonical rules. Yet, as historians demonstrated, the expansion of Christianity in the New World challenged ecclesiastical institutions and these rules were adapted to the new context of racial slave societies. This paper focuses on the discrepancies in the administration of the marriage sacrament in the French Caribbean depending on the status, racial category and religious ascendancy of the faithful.

Indeed, the archives of the Propaganda Fide Roman congregation dealing with the French Caribbean contain many requests from French missionaries to Roman cardinals in order to overcome affinity and consanguinity canonical marriage impediments for “negroes”. These exceptional measures, applied exclusively to non-white Christians, constituted an infringement to the Tridentine rules justified by racial considerations about their so-called “luxurious nature”. Such practices thus introduced in these Christian societies a disparity based upon African or European ascendancy. The fact that these exemptions applied to all enslaved people regardless of when they were baptized shows that all non-white Christians were treated as perpetual neophytes and suggests a racial conception of this canonical notion. Parish registers also illustrate the fragmentary respect of Tridentine rules for the marriage of enslaved people, further demonstrating the racialization of this Christian ritual.

Bio: I am a PhD student at the École des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales in Paris, and I am currently a temporary research and teaching assistant at the University of Caen Normandie. My work focuses on the evangelization of enslaved Africans in the French Caribbean in the 17th

and 18th centuries. I question the links between the construction of a christian slavery, that is a slave society in which all the enslaved are supposedly Christians, and the racialization of slavery. I am studying if and in what extent race became a political tool used by missionaries to maintain and reproduce racial slavery.

Matthew Elia, Saving, Enslaving, and the Early Modern Theological Invention of Race: From Augustine to Grotius (by way of Sylvia Wynter)

Abstract: In Sylvia Wynter’s influential genealogy, a key moment in the early modern racialization of the human unfolds in the transformation of ‘Christian Man’ into ‘Man1’ — her terms for theorizing not the mere disappearance of religion into the secular, but the West’s reinvention of its constitutive Other: in the place of the enemy-of-Christ internal to Europe (whether in the figure of the Jew or the heretic), now “it was to be the peoples of the militarily expropriated New World territories (i.e., Indians), as well as the enslaved peoples of Black Africa (i.e., Negroes), that were made to reoccupy the matrix slot of Otherness.”¹ Wynter’s theoretical framework is compelling, even as its archival evidence remains suggestive and incomplete.

This paper examines the explanatory power of her theory by zooming in on one promising site of this transformation taking place: the early modern reception of a late ancient etymology found in Saint Augustine, which justifies slavery by linking ‘enslaving’ (servire) to ‘saving’ (servare)² Recent histories of early modern Christian thought have shown how this Augustinian theory seized the attention Hobbes, Locke, Bodin, and (the figure I focus on here) Hugo Grotius, yet they do not link this notion—that in certain contexts, to enslave someone is to save them—to the emerging racial categories of otherness Wynter helps us see.³ Focusing on Grotius’s reception of Augustine’s slavery theory in the context of colonial expansion, this paper shows the power of Wynter’s framework to illumine the European religio-racial imaginary by which Africans would emerge as targets both of slavery and salvation, while underscoring the vital need for interdisciplinary approaches to the study of race and religion in the early modern Atlantic world.

1 Sylvia Wynter, “Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom Towards the Human, After Man, Its Overrepresentation—An Argument,” *CR: The New Centennial Review* 3, No. 3 (Fall 2003), 265-6.

2 In my wider project, I take up the Augustinian tradition’s role in the making of racial slavery more broadly: *The Problem of the Christian Master: Augustine in the Afterlife of Slavery* (New Haven: Yale University Press, under contract).

3 Mary Nyquist, *Arbitrary Rule: Slavery, Tyranny, and the Power of Life and Death* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 218-26

Bio: Matthew Elia is currently a Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Virginia in the multidisciplinary Engagements program and starting fall 2023 will be Assistant Professor of Theology, Race, and Environment at Saint Louis University. His first book, *The Problem of the Christian Master: Augustine in the Afterlife of Slavery*, is forthcoming with Yale University Press. His work is published or forthcoming in the *Journal of Religious Ethics*, the *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics*, *Biblical Interpretation*, *Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology*, and elsewhere. He earned his PhD in the Graduate Program of Religion at Duke University, supported by an ACLS/Mellon Dissertation Fellowship

José Villagrana, Theorizing Early Modern Apocalyptic Racism in the Colonial Context

Abstract: The ideological struggle between Bartolomé de las Casas, an advocate for indigenous rights and colonial reform, and Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, an apologist for Spanish colonial violence, has received extensive critical attention. Las Casas and Sepúlveda's debate revolves around Aristotelian conceptions of just war and natural slavery with regard to Amerindians. This presentation, however, focuses on a comparatively neglected third participant in the debate, the Franciscan Toribio de Benavente Motolinía. Motolinía opposed Las Casas' proposed colonial reforms that recognized Amerindians' sovereignty on the grounds that the prophetic Book of Daniel authorized Spanish claims to universal dominion. In a 1555 letter to Emperor Charles V, Motolinía argues that Las Casas is a false prophet misled by satanic influence; against Las Casas, he claims that Daniel authorized Charles' right to universal dominion over the world. The apocalyptically-grounded ideological struggle between Motolinía and Las Casas is significant for our understanding of Spanish colonial policy with regard to the racist fictions it imputed to the bodies and behaviors of the Indigenous peoples of the Americas. Motolinía endorsed Charles' claim to universal dominion because it justified using violence and forced labor to correct Amerindians' perceived inherent deficiencies that made them susceptible to idolatry and satanic influence—idleness of will and rational feebleness. By improving such perceived inherent deficiencies through violence and forced labor, Motolinía thought, Amerindians could eventually be assimilated into the prophetic vision of Christ's future kingdom.

Bio: José Juan Villagrana is Assistant Professor of English at Santa Clara University. He is author of *Racial Apocalypse: The Cultivation of Supremacy in the Early Modern World*, published by Routledge in 2022, as part of the *Critical Junctures in Early Modernities Series* edited by Nicholas Jones and Derrick Higginbotham. His scholarly publications have appeared in the *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies*, *Sidney Journal*, and *Studies in Philology*, and recent opinion pieces have been published in *Visible Magazine* and *Caló News*. His current book project is titled *The Innocent Race: How European Colonists Racialized Themselves as Legally and Morally Blameless in the Early Modern World*. Villagrana is a legally blind, low-vision scholar.

Brian Hamm, Lost Tribes or the Law of Moses?: Competing Constructions of 'Jews' and 'Jewishness' in the Early Modern Spanish World

Abstract: Despite the innumerable prohibitions against Jews traveling to the Spanish Indies, many Spaniards perceived "Jews" to be present throughout the New World. Yet, this "perception" was neither a neutral nor a passive process. It required the conceptual construction of the "Jewish" subject. As there were no openly practicing Jews in colonial Spanish America, how could a "Jew" be recognized? To answer this question, late medieval and early modern Spaniards developed two strategies of "racemaking." Both are well-known, yet they are

very rarely considered together. The first strategy was that of *limpieza de sangre*, of dividing the population into two groups: “Old Christians,” who had “pure” Christian blood, and “New Christians” (or *conversos*) who suffered the stigma of Jewish ancestry and were commonly suspected of secretly adhering to the “Law of Moses.” The second strategy, the so-called “Jewish Indian theory,” posited that Native Americans possessed certain “Jewish” characteristics and behaviors, which revealed their descent from either the “lost tribes” or some other Jewish group (e.g., exiles from Jerusalem after 70 CE). It is the argument of this paper that despite a common “racemaking” goal, these two strategies of defining and detecting “Jews” in the New World worked to contrary purposes, creating fundamentally contradictory pictures of “Jewishness.” While the “Jewish Indian theory” defined Jews as unmistakably “Other” to Iberian Catholicism (idolatrous vs. worshipping the true God; weak vs. strong; poor vs. rich, etc.), the strategy of *limpieza de sangre* rendered Judaism as uncomfortably similar to Iberian Christianity, so that it was only with effort—often at the behest of the Inquisition—that the followers of the “Law of Moses” could be differentiated from those who adhered to the “Law of Christ.” Because these two methods of creating “Jews” were so deeply opposed, it is especially illuminating when they come into direct contact. This paper concludes with one such instance: the mid-seventeenth-century account of Antonio de Montesinos, a Portuguese converso who claimed to have encountered members of the Lost Tribe of Reuben in the backlands of South America. Montesinos’s *relación* exemplifies well the contradictions between these two strategies of racemaking.

Bio: Brian Hamm is an historian of colonial Latin America and the early modern Atlantic world, specializing in religious history and the history of migration. Before coming to Samford in 2019, he was a Postdoctoral Fellow at the Frankel Institute for Advanced Judaic Studies at the University of Michigan. He has published journal articles in *Jewish History* and *Anais de História de Além-Mar*, as well as two book chapters in edited volumes. He is currently working to finish a book manuscript entitled *Strangers and Kinsmen: Portuguese Immigrants and Local Society in the Spanish Circum-Caribbean, 1492-1665*.

Bento Mota, *The Colour of Guilt: The Physical Descriptions of Saint Thomas, the Apostle, as an answer to the South American Indigenous unbelief (1545-1647)*

Abstract: This paper aims to understand the descriptions of the traces of Saint Thomas in the Jesuit sources as an answer to the problem of the ignorance of God by the indigenous of South America. The first missions of the Jesuits made an association between Saint Thomas, the Apostle (Tomé, in Portuguese), and a supposed entity of the indigenous people of the coast of Brazil: Sumé. This figure was described as a white man with a beard who would have differentiated them from animals. In these accounts, Sumé / Saint Thomas would have been expelled from America with arrows by indigenous people with dark skin. This myth; became one of the most important in the South Atlantic. Historiography has interpreted it as an attempt to link Amerindians to universal monogeny. The proposal here is to understand this mythical figure as an artificial way of creating an idol for non-idolatrous peoples based on racial descriptions. From the letters of Manuel da Nóbrega (1545) until the treatises of Alonso Sandoval (1647), the

objective here is to demonstrate how the physical description of this figure sought to impute the guilt of the South American peoples in the face of their ignorance and unbelief in God.

Bio: Bento Machado Mota holds his PhD in Social History from the University of São Paulo (Brazil) Currently he is associated with the Instituto de Historia y Antropología de las Religiones (México). He has articles and has held conferences on the following topics: indigenous and African slavery and early modern theology. In his dissertation, defended the thesis “The highest ignorance: invincible ignorance and the Europeans and South American debates among the salvation of the indigenous people of Brazil from Antônio Vieira (1535-1719)”. The focus of his research is: the relation between missionaries and indigenous people in South America; Anthropology; Philosophy and Theology of Early modern history; Moral Probabilism; Legal History; Renaissance studies; History of religions and History of salvation.

Lindsay Sidders, “without spot or shadow of original sin”: The Rhetoric of Whiteness, Purity, and Conquest in Early Colonial New Spain

Abstract: This paper examines the rhetoric of an influential creole bishop in early colonial Mexico, Bishop of Oaxaca, Juan Bartolome de Bohórquez e Hinojosa (b.1572-d.1633) through a sermon given in the cathedral of Puebla on 15 December 1619 for the event of the Immaculate Conception of Mary. My interpretation of this Bishop's discourse provides evidence of the projection of a legible discourse of purity and “whitening” in elite creole society. The conspicuous subtext of this event was to insinuate an analogy between the Immaculate Conception and the creation of the New World, to idealize the virtue and value of female purity, and to create and maintain racial hierarchies by tethering purity and cleanliness, God's grace, and immortality to whiteness. While this sermon claimed to be a celebration of God's benevolent decision to create a world without sin, it also acted as an argument for legitimate conquest and the strict observance of the gendered and racialized order as upheld by creole ecclesiastical elites. This discourse of cleansing, whitening, and reproduction operated within the broader logic of the sistema de castas, which allowed for the genealogical purification of Indigenous people through mixture with Spanish blood. This early seventeenth-century sermon laid out an elite creole vision of representative and rooted Hispanism through the religious rhetoric of Marianism and an interpretation of the Immaculate Conception. The audience would have consisted of peninsular and creole elites and very likely their enslaved labour, and the symbolism, language, and references of the sermon are reflective of this atmosphere.

Bio: Lindsay C. Sidders earned her PhD from the University of Toronto in 2021. Her dissertation was titled, "Conquering Creoles: Transculturation, Whiteness, and the Limits of Empire in New Spain, 1521-1625," and she is currently working on transforming it into a book manuscript. She currently works as a research analyst at a not-for-profit in Toronto.

KEYNOTE: Dennis Austin Britton, Racializing Reprobation: Calvinist Affects in the Early Modern Colonial Context

Bio: Dennis Austin Britton is Associate Professor of English at the University of British Columbia. He is the author of *Becoming Christian: Race, Reformation, and Early Modern English Romance* (2014), coeditor with Melissa Walter of *Rethinking Shakespeare Source Study: Audiences, Authors, and Digital Technologies* (2018), and coeditor with Kimberly Anne Coles of "Spenser and Race," a special issue of *Spenser Studies* (2021). He is currently working on a monograph entitled "Shakespeare and Pity: Feeling Difference on the Early Modern English Stage."

Cecilio M Cooper, Devilishly Infectious Dominion

Abstract: Possession is a multivalent concept that not only describes control over objects and lifeforms subject to property relations, but also encompasses invasive inhabitations by otherworldly entities. By contending with certain key tropes around unholy possession, my paper contextualizes demonization of blackness during the 'burning times' and inquisitions within broader efforts to spatially constitute the Atlantic World as a domain for chattel slavery. This departs from a tendency to frame early modern witch hunts as principally epitomizing cisheteropatriarchal persecution of white European femininity. Sinfulness was thought to render Man susceptible to infernal infestation according to Christian doctrine, which was feared to be a communicable malady endemic to dark beings. Heathen spirituality and physiological aberrance were declared intrinsic to African-derived persons such that they were territorialized as vectors for malevolent disease wherever they were dispersed. Though witch hunts have been often portrayed throughout preceding waves of scholarship and popular culture as supra-racial phenomena, I show how presumptions that blackness evidenced diabolical infestation of white corporeal integrity are actually inextricably tethered to broader questions around naturalist taxonomies and cartography. This paper ultimately theorizes how blackness inflects demonological conceptions of space and dominion by expanding scholarly debates tying skin color to religious chromatic symbolism and sovereignty.

Bio: Cecilio M. Cooper is a 2023-24 Folger Institute Long-Term Fellow. They've previously held postdoctoral fellowships at New York University as well as the University of Michigan. Via black critical thought, they broadly address debates around gender, political theology, cartography, iconography, and science studies. Their first book manuscript examines the occulted role blackness and darkness play in cosmological constitutions of subsurface space by engaging the visual cultures of alchemy and demonology. Cooper's research has been supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities, American Antiquarian Society, John Carter Brown Library, Yale Center for British Art, and Folger Shakespeare Library, among others.

Ashleigh Elser, Noah's Raven, Noah's Son: Blackness and Slavery in Early Modern Thought

Abstract: Scholars have mined the reception history of the Curse of Ham in Genesis 9 as a key source for an etiology of racialized slavery among early modern Christians. While the Curse of Ham has become a key text in the study of Christian discourses on slavery, scholars have not yet recognized the significance of another figure who emerges as Ham's double in this interpretive history: Noah's long-lost raven. Like Ham, the reception history of Noah's raven includes narratives of moral failure, excessive or deviant sexual appetites, and a subsequent "curse" that leaves its victim black. This last parallel—between what Guillaume Postel called the "wicked tinge" in his popular sixteenth century *Cosmographia* to signify Ham's divine punishment and what one thirteenth-century bestiary called the "blackness of sin" signified by this now black bird—is noteworthy given the fact that narratives of the raven's transformation from a white to a black bird emerge early in Greco-Roman mythology and in commentaries on Genesis going back to the fourth century, long before we see similar moves in commentaries on Ham. Building on previous reception histories of Ham's curse as well as recent work in animal studies on the "all-too-fraught proximity between the enslaved person and the nonhuman animal," this paper will explore the symbolic traffic between Noah's raven and Noah's son in order to advance an account of how early modern Christian interpreters merged an etiology of natural slavery and an etiology of blackness into a single story.

Bio: Ashleigh Elser is a Visiting Scholar in the Department of Theological Studies at Saint Louis University. Her research focuses on the history of biblical interpretation, and specifically on the choices readers make when they are confronted with ethical, practical, or hermeneutic difficulties in the Hebrew Bible. She completed her PhD in Religious Studies at the University of Virginia and a Lilly Postdoctoral Fellowship at Valparaiso University. Her work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Biblical Interpretation*, *Studies in Christian Ethics*, and the *Journal of Textual Reasoning*.

Anita Raychawdhuri, Disrupting White Universalism in Early Modern Christianity: Ben Jonson's The Masque of Blackness, Black Madonnas, and the Speculative Ocean

Abstract: White womanhood is a constructed scalable concept where women's capacities for reproduction as well as their alleged positions as the bearers of virtue and chastity reaffirm whiteness's value and reproduction under an Anglo-Christian context. However, the whiteness of Christian mothers (specifically Eve and the Virgin Mary) are often taken for granted. Indeed, the ways that queerness and race become entangled in these women complicates white supremacist Christian notions of origin and race. Through a case study of Ben Jonson's *The Masque of Blackness I* excavate the resonances of Mother Goddesses, particularly the Virgin Mary, and how Queen Anna of Denmark's appropriation of Black beauty (who performed in blackface in the masque while visibly pregnant) relates to the phenomenon of Black Madonnas as seen in *La Virgen de Montserrat*, *Our Lady of Willesden*, and the *Lady of Loreto*. Working from Ruben Espinosa's writing on Black Madonnas and Maggie Soldberg's complicating of the Virgin Mary's relationship to desire, through the presence of Black Madonnas I seek to reread the significations of the Virgin Mary in early modern English drama. In particular, this paper seeks to interrogate Queen Anna's understandings of blackness through motherhood and race.

Furthermore, the Virgin Mary's link to the ocean (as *Stella Maris*) reorients a potential reading of the maritime space of the Atlantic that is both a space of violence and trauma due to the transatlantic slave trade but also a space used recently by Black feminists such as Christina Sharpe, Alexis Pauline Gumbs, and Octavia Butler as a space of speculation and worldbuilding in the wake, to use Sharpe's term. Finally, though rarely discussed, Ben Jonson's masque indeed places the ocean and its linkage to mother goddesses as essential to the fabric of race and desire in the masque. Through a linkage of premodern critical race studies and queer studies this paper hopes to untangle the pathways of racemaking and desire that circulate around Black Madonnas by considering their presence in early modern English literature's oceanic imaginings.

Bio: Anita Raychawdhuri is an Assistant Professor at the University of Houston Downtown. She earned her PhD at the University of California Santa Barbara, specializing in early modern drama, premodern critical race studies, and queer studies. She is working on a project on early modern conceptions of scale as it relates to race and desire. Her work is forthcoming in *The Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies*, a collection on Cavendish and Milton, *Race/Queer/Queens*, and an entry on race for the Palgrave Encyclopedia for early modern women. She is an editor for Margaret Cavendish's *Poems and Fancies*, volume 2.

Caitlin Di Martino, *La Virgen del Sagrario and the Color of Sin and Sanctity in Early Modern Toledo*

Abstract: In a sermon published in Toledo in 1661, Pablo de la Peña y Lezcano described the Virgin Mary's "freedom" from original sin as a resplendent whiteness. Sin, "called darkness and obscurity," was a "stain" never found in Mary who, "born most free," was granted the gift of whiteness and purity by the holy spirit. Such chromatic and metaphorical descriptions of the Immaculate Conception frequently found their way into treatises published or drafted in Toledo during the same period in which residents became increasingly concerned with maintaining the purity of blood (*limpieza de sangre*) of "Old Christians" from newly converted Muslims and Jews. By the late seventeenth century, this discourse was likewise deployed to differentiate between white Spanish Christians and enslaved Africans.

The *Virgen del Sagrario*, a Romanesque statue of the Virgin Mary with black skin that was recontextualized as a contact relic in 1584 as one of the foremost Marian images of the region, stands in harsh contradiction to textual descriptions of Mary's symbolic and ethnic whiteness. In this paper, I examine painted representations of the *Virgen del Sagrario* and other local "Black Madonna" statues in light of anxieties surrounding the *limpieza de sangre* and theological debates on the "stain" of sin during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. I explore how sermons, religious tracts, theatrical sources, and votive paintings disclose the concern for how sin and lineage appeared across the body chromatically, arguing that the newly-popularized *Virgen del Sagrario* mediated the local interest in the appearance, permanence, and perceived dangers of religious and ethnic differences.

Bio: Caitlin Irene DiMartino is a PhD candidate in Art History at Northwestern University in Chicago. Her dissertation investigates how early modern ideas about race, color, and materiality were articulated and redefined in representations of French and Iberian examples of Black Madonna statues. Prior to Northwestern, she received a Masters degree from the University of Texas, Austin where she focused on representations of masculinity and racialization in late medieval manuscripts. Cait has previously served as a Curatorial Fellow at the Block Museum of Art at Northwestern University, a Graduate Student Representative for the Department of Art History, and as the membership co-chair for the Northwestern University Graduate Workers Union.

Ashley Coleman Taylor, The Coloniality of Religion and Taíno Resistance in Sixteenth Century Puerto Rico

Abstract: In her 2003 essay,¹ philosopher and cultural theorist Sylvia Wynter describes the European Christian ideologies of exclusion and “othering” undergirding 15th century colonial expansion and later the construction of racialized beings and their lands. She writes, “large-scale accumulation of unpaid land, unpaid labor, and overall wealth expropriated by Western Europe from non-European peoples... was to lay the basis...of the...specific conception of what it was to be [an overrepresented/normalized Christian] human...” and consequently what it meant to be “pagan idolator” or nonhuman/subjugated Other.² The paper situates the work of Wynter to explore the role of 15th century Christian “man” and the ideologies of control and racialization through the demonization of Indigenous Taíno “others” in Puerto Rico and additional sites in the Caribbean. Wynter helps us understand how Spanish colonial forces laid the “foundational basis of modernity” and positioned the non-European Other as savage idolator bereft of morality, history, and culture to allow for ease of control.³ Shifting the gaze, I center Taíno actors to demonstrate how they resisted the coloniality of religion through their own use of cosmologically imbued stone objects called *cemí*, powerful religio-cultural objects in the complex Indigenous world. I highlight indigenous responses to the powerful forces that sought to usurp their land and exploit their bodies.

¹ Wynter, Sylvia. "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom: Towards the Human, After Man, Its Overrepresentation--An Argument." *CR: The New Centennial Review* 3, no. 3 (2003): 257-337. doi:10.1353/ncr.2004.0015

² *Ibid*, 291.

³ *Ibid*, 288.

Bio: Ashley Coleman Taylor, Ph.D. (she/her) is an Assistant Professor of Religious Studies and Women's and Gender Studies at the University of Texas at Austin. As a transdisciplinary ethnographer, she specializes in the intersecting experiences of embodiment, Black genders, and Africana religions in Puerto Rico and Atlanta, Georgia. Inspired by Atlantic and Caribbean waterscapes, Dr. Coleman Taylor interweaves metaphors of fluidity, radical empiricism, and dynamism in her work. Her current book-in-progress, tentatively titled *Majestad Negra: Race, Class, Gender and Religious Experience in the Puerto Rican Imaginary*, is an intersectional Black feminist approach to race, class, gender, and coloniality in Puerto Rico.

Justine Walden, Capuchin Missionaries and AfroCatholic Metaphysics: Resisting Race in the Early Modern Black Atlantic

Abstract: This paper considers how in the second half of the seventeenth century, the transnational missionary order of Capuchins zealously promoted Catholicism among Africans and their descendants on both sides of the Black Atlantic (Kongo-Angola, Brazil, New Spain, and the Iberian Caribbean), and to considerable success. Describing Capuchin tactics and strategies of evangelization, I show how the encounter between Catholicism and African traditional religion resulted in the emergence of various elastic, syncretic, and hybrid forms of AfroCatholicism.

Contrary to stereotypes of Catholicism as rigid and unyielding, Capuchins in precolonial Africa, constrained by scarce resources and jurisdictional limitations, frequently acceded to African preferences and ritual forms, leading to specifically Kongolese and Angolan-infused, syncretic, and flexible forms of AfroCatholicism. In diaspora, despite the efforts of some missionaries to restrain and reroute African religious practices into a European mold, displaced Africans continued to blend Catholic and traditional African religious elements to produce the still-more-eclectic forms of AfroCatholicism of Vodoun, Candomblé, and Santería.

Throughout the early modern Atlantic, Capuchins labored as advocates and allies of Africans to promote social justice and remedy the abuses of slavery. A significant portion of Capuchin activities, such as arranging for the freeing of the unjustly enslaved and their insistence in Havana in 1686 that all enslaved black Africans be freed and then compensated for wages, resisted and opposed emerging forces of antiblack racism.

Yet beyond the realm of the social, specific metaphysical aspects of Catholicism and traditional African religion worked in tandem to resist the growth and imposition of new categories of race.

As categories of antiblack racism were constructed and applied in the Transatlantic slave trade, somatic as against spiritual features increasingly served as inflexible indices of invisible qualities such as character, personhood, and mental aptitude, and such indicators were then felt to traverse generations. Skin color, for example, assumed outsized importance as a presumptive indicator of human difference.

Both Catholicism and traditional African religion espoused a vision of the cosmos in which the realms of spirit and matter were inextricably intertwined and in which inanimate and ancestor spirits routinely circulated among the living. In both systems, the boundary between spirit and matter was porous, and both systems espoused a capacious attitude toward 'holy matter' in which multiple forms of matter were felt to channel and house the divine. Human bodies were privileged as vessels of spirit, but their features, including blackness, were seen as largely accidental. All of these features of Catholicism and traditional African religion resisted categories of racialization by limiting the relative importance of human physiognomy. Conversely, the erection of clear and distinct boundaries between matter and spirit (as occurred

within Protestantism) helped to bracket off and privilege the corporal as the prime bearer of human identity in a way that simply did not take place in Atlantic AfroCatholicism.

This paper therefore argues that Atlantic Catholicism resisted racemaking in a twofold manner. Capuchins enabled the emergence of a hybridized Afro-Catholicism and promoted African dignity, and at a broader remove, Catholicism's emphasis upon spirit-infused matter in both its European-orthodox and syncretic, Africanized variants had the effect of resisting a creeping bodily determinism that was the *sine qua non* of racemaking.

Bio: Justine Walden is a social, religious, and cultural historian of early modern Europe and the World. Her background is in Philosophy and critical thought, and she holds a Ph.D. in Renaissance Studies and Early Modern History from Yale University. She has been a Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Toronto, a Solmsen Fellow at the Institute for Research in the Humanities at the University of Wisconsin, and in 2023-24 will be a Fellow at Harvard's Villa I Tatti. She has examined intersections between religion, enslavement, race, and blackness in Italy, the Mediterranean, precolonial Africa, and the Atlantic, and has published in journals such as *Renaissance Quarterly* and *Slavery and Abolition*. A current monograph project examines Capuchin missionary engagement with slavery and antislavery across the seventeenth-century Black Atlantic.

Angelo Cattaneo, *The Arte da lingua de Angola and the Religious and Linguistic Interactions between the Jesuits and the Enslaved People from Congo and Angola in Colonial Brasil*

Abstract: Within the framework of the Jesuit mission in Salvador de Bahia, Pedro Dias S.J. (c. 1621-1700), born in the Minas Gerais region, Brasil, and Miguel Cardoso S.J. (1659-1721), a native of the Kingdom of Angola, who spoke Kimbundu and Portuguese, compiled a pioneering manuscript grammar of Kimbundu, a sub-Saharan Bantu language spoken in the Kingdom of Angola, widely used by the Afro-descended communities that lived in the main urban centres of colonial Brazil. Sent to Lisbon, the grammar was printed by the royal press in 1697 under the eloquent title *Arte da lingua de Angola, oeferecida a Virgem Senhora N[ossa] do Rosario, Mãe, e Senhora dos mesmos Pretos...* (Grammar of the Language of Angola, bestowed to the Virgin Mary of the Rosary, Mother [of Jesus], and also Lady of the Blacks...)¹

In 1663, Dias began learning Kimbundu at the Jesuit College in Rio de Janeiro and decided to write a grammar of this African language as a pedagogical tool, aimed mainly at catechists (not exclusively missionaries), to communicate with the descendants of Angolan and Congolese slaves brought to Brazil since the mid-sixteenth century. In their prologue, Dias and Cardoso explained that the learning and coding of this sub-Saharan language, in colonial Brazil, served to fill 'the spiritual need in which Angolans lie' (pela necessidade espiritual em que jazem os angolanos). Linguistic practices were an integral part of Jesuit religious proselytism directed to the black population. Dias also pointed out that 'up to that time, no grammar of this language had yet been written in Angola, nor in Brazil' (não se acha nenhuma Gramática desta língua, nem no Brasil nem no Reino de Angola). Although inspired by the *De institutione grammatica libri tres* (Lisbon, 1572) by Emmanuel Álvares, S.J., the pioneering work by Dias and Cardoso has its main roots in the daily interactions with the communities of pretos, the African slaves from the kingdoms of Congo and Angola, and their descendants, in the regions of Rio de Janeiro, Minas Gerais and Salvador de Bahia, who gathered around some churches and confraternities, such as the Igreja de Nossa Senhora do Rosário dos Pretos (Church of Our Lady of the Rosary of the

Blacks) in the center of Bahia, in the Pelourinho, reserved for the black population. This paper aims to highlight that Dias' and Cardoso's grammar, well beyond the relevant linguistic aspects of codifying Kimbundu, is a document that clearly testifies to the claim to full participation in spiritual and social life by the Afro-descended communities that lived in the main urban centers of colonial Brasil. At the same time, by addressing one of the main lines of research of the symposium, it allows us to analyse how far such a pioneering cultural process of legitimisation of an African language and the communities that spoke it, could question the associations between the racialised identity of African slaves and their descendants and social reprobation in a colonial context.

1 Arte da lingua de Angola, oeferecida a Virgem Senhora N[ossa] do Rosario, Mãy, e Senhora dos mesmos Pretos pelo P. Pedro Dias Da Companhia de Jesu. Lisboa, Na Officina de Miguel Delandes, Impressor de Sua Magestade. com todas as licenças necessarias. Anno 1697. The John Carter Brown Library in Providence, RI, has made available the digital, open-access reproduction of the work: <<https://archive.org/details/artedalinguadean00dias>>.

Bio: Angelo Cattaneo is a researcher for CNR, the National Research Council of Italy as well as Adjunct Professor of World History at the University of Florence. Between 2008 and 2018 he worked as “Principal Investigator” at the NOVA University of Lisbon.

His research centres on two main topics which span from the thirteenth to the seventeenth centuries: the cultural construction of space (studying cosmography, cartography, travel literature and the spatiality of languages and religions); and the history of cross-cultural encounters mostly at the interface of the Portuguese empire, focusing on Catholic missions and trade. Amongst his current projects, he is pursuing the study of the history of the first contacts of world languages and cultures in early modernity from a global perspective.

He was the co-P.I. of the project ‘Interactions between Rivals: the Christian Mission and Buddhist Sects in Japan (c. 1549-c.1647)’ (Lisbon, Nova University, FCT, 2012-2015) and the P.I. of the exploratory funded project ‘The Space of Languages. The Portuguese Language in the Early Modern World’ (Lisbon, NOVA FCSH, 2015-2017).

His publications include *Fra Mauro's Mappa mundi and Fifteenth-Century Venice* (Brepols 2011), the edited volumes *Shores of Vespucci* and *Interactions between Rivals: the Christian Mission and Buddhist Sects in Japan* (Peter Lang 2018 and 2021), as well as *Language Dynamics in the Early Modern World* (Routledge 2022). In 2022 he authored the volume *Tradurre il mondo. Le missioni, il portoghese e nuovi spazi di lingue connesse nella prima età moderna* (Translating the World. Missions, the Portuguese language, and new spaces of connected languages in early modernity, Rome 2022) and the journal article "Entangled Histories, Catholic Missions and Languages. Mapping Amerindian, African and Asian Languages Through Portuguese in Early Modernity" (CROMOHS, 2022 - doi: <https://doi.org/10.36253/cromohs-13822>).

His research has been supported by numerous awards, such as the FCT, CNRS, and Harvard University-ITa post-doctoral fellowships, as well as research fellowships from the John Carter Brown Library, the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research - NWO and the Japan and Korea Foundations.

Ty Reese, 'to sit under the Nose of, a Black Boy to hear Him pointing or laying out their faults before them': The Rev. Philip Quaque and His Cape Coast Castle Mission, 1766-181

Abstract: In February 1766, the Rev. Philip Quaque returned to Cape Coast, his birthplace, to establish his S.P.G. mission and to serve as the Cape Coast Castle chaplain. Quaque left Cape Coast in 1754 [at 13 years old] for London where he was educated, converted and ordained. Upon his arrival, and until his death in 1816, racial and religious differences hindered his ability to fulfill his mission. For the local peoples, especially his extended family, Quaque was no longer one of them as he lost his language and cultural knowledge. The reason for this was during his time in England Quaque had become an Englishman, he was no longer an African. Yet, the garrison saw him not as an Englishman but as an African and both racial and religious differences created continuous tensions and obstacles to his work. At the same time, Quaque did not see the garrison as Englishmen rather he found the castle was full of 'all Scotch & Irish People, rank Presbyterians' with only 2 or 3 'Englishmen.' While Quaque focused on the religious differences, the garrison focused on the racial and disliked Quaque's lectures that they needed to act like good Englishmen and Christians. The problem here was that at a West African slave trade enclave there was no place for a Black Protestant like Quaque and very little support, from the community or the garrison, for his proselytizing activities.

Bio: Ty M. Reese is finishing up a history of Cape Coast and its castle from 1750-1821. Cape Coast was a Gold Coast Fante and Fante controlled slave trading enclave and the castle served as the administrative center of Britain's Company of Merchants Trading to Africa. This work seeks to explore all elements of this enclave to understand how the coastal trade worked and its consequences upon the local community. An important individual at this enclave was the Rev. Philip Quaque.