Oroonoko and the Mapping of Africa

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'[M]aps inspire literary creation',[1] Tom Conley argues, noting the frequent interweaving of cartography and fiction in early modern writing: maps were turned into poetic metaphors, used as stage props, and discussed in prose; they were held up as the potent symbols of a new geographical consciousness in Europe, and their presence on the page cannot even be gauged through overt references to cartography alone. Below the visual surface of the map lurks the scientific work of observation, measurement, calculation and projection, fostering a particular kind of cartographic gaze that shaped the perception of space in imaginative writing as well as in many other realms of social and aesthetic practice. This gaze turned the tactile, sensory world of experience into flattened, two-dimensional scenes of visual contemplation by filtering spatial data through mathematically inspired formulae of graphic representation. Maps rely on numbers but cannot be restricted to the mathematical: 'the measure of mapping', Denis

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[1] Tom Conley, 'Early Modern Literature and Cartography: An Overview', in *The History of Cartography, vol. 3: Cartography in the European Renaissance*, 2 parts, ed. David Woodward (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2007), part 1, pp. 401-11 (p. 401). This standard reference work for the history of early modern cartography includes seven chapters devoted to the link between literature and cartography (pp. 401-76). For a selection of other recent critical works in the field, see D.K. Smith, *The Cartographic Imagination in Early Modern England: Re-writing the World in Marlowe, Spenser, Raleigh and Marvell* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2008); Andrew Gordon and Bernhard Klein (eds), *Literature, Mapping, and the Politics of Space in Early Modern Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Tom Conley, *The Self-Made Map. Cartographic Writing in Early Modern France* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996); John Gillies, *Shakespeare and the Geography of Difference* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); and Richard Helgerson, *Forms of Nationhood: The Elizabethan Writing of England* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1992). For some influential theoretical approaches to the study of maps, see Christian Jacob, *The Sovereign Map. Theoretical Approaches in Cartography throughout History*, trans. Tom Conley (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2006); and J.B. Harley, *The New Nature of Maps. Essays in the History of Cartography*, ed. Paul Laxton (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001).

Cosgrove writes, 'may equally be spiritual, political or moral.'[2] Or, indeed, social: since space is no scientific abstraction, maps never encompassed the physical environment without reference to the human bodies inhabiting that environment, a connection reinforced visually by those Dutch and Flemish cartographers of the seventeenth century who included portraits depicting representative local figures dressed in regional costume in the margins of their maps.

Such social 'acts of mapping',[3] I suggest in this essay,[4] have left their traces in early modern fiction, especially in fiction dealing with the non-European world. Using Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko, or The Royal Slave* (1688) as a literary reference point, and contemporary European maps of the African continent as a cartographic context, I want to argue that the prominent juxtaposition of land and people on seventeenth-century maps affected not only the understanding of human diversity around the globe but also the creation of a literary character such as Oroonoko, whose fictional identity is grounded in patterns of racial and ethnic difference prefigured by the representational conventions developed in the mapmaking workshops of early modern Europe. The argument presented here will entail, first, a brief comparison between the respective geographical frameworks of Oroonoko and his most immediate literary ancestor in English literature, Othello, in the context of the sixteenth-century mapping of Africa, and second, a discussion of a sequence of continental maps of Africa circulating in Europe in the seventeenth century.

Africa in Maps and Texts

Oroonoko has long been seen as a prime example of the way seventeenth-century literature processed changes in European spatial awareness mirrored in the visual advances of cartography. Catherine Gallagher has called the book 'the first literary work in English to grasp the global interactions of the modern world',[5] a universal connectedness visualized in unprecedented graphic detail over a century earlier on the

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[2] Denis Cosgrove, 'Introduction: Mapping Meaning', in *Mappings*, ed. Cosgrove (London: Reaktion, 1999), pp. 1-23 (p. 2).
[3] The phrase is Denis Cosgrove's. See ibid., p. 1.
[4] This essay was completed in 2013 as a contribution to the present volume. Sections of it revisit (and substantially revise) some of the material included in my 'Randfiguren. Othello, Oroonoko und die kartographische Repräsentation Afrikas', in *Imaginationen des Anderen im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert*, Wolfenbütteler Forschungen 97, ed. Michaela Boenke and Ina Schabert (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2002), pp. 185-216.
[5] Catherine Gallagher, 'Introduction: Cultural and Historical Background', in Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko*, ed. Gallagher (Boston and New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000), pp. 3-25 (p. 3).

world maps of geographers such as Abraham Ortelius and Gerard Mercator. Behn's tale combines in its setting the three corners of a triangle—Europe, Africa and the New World—and stresses throughout the 'mutual interpenetration'[6] of all three places: Coromantine, the seventeenth-century, English-built slave castle on the Gold Coast (modern Ghana) where Oroonoko is captured, supplies slave labour to the plantations in Suriname, on the other side of the Atlantic, and to the Caribbean more widely, from where raw materials such as tobacco, sugar, cotton, cocoa and coffee are exported to Europe, and specifically to England, where the book is written. World maps like Ortelius's hugely successful *Typus Orbis Terrarum* (first state 1570; in print for over 40 years), showed all the regions of the earth linked through one vast, navigable body of water, enabling the mental appropriation of this interlocking, transcontinental world order, and defining it visually as structured around the north Atlantic corridor, the key spatial axis holding the plot of Behn's novel together.

Africa appeared on the modern world map as a self-contained continent, situated as a spatially separate entity from other unified land masses. To represent Africa in this fashion is already the product of a gaze conditioned by modern cartography. For the classical geographers, who invented the division of the world into the three continents Asia, Africa, and Europe[7]—a notion later theologized and largely abstracted from empirical reality in the medieval period—Africa's northern regions were commonly connected to a broadly conceived Mediterranean, bordered further south by the torrid or uninhabitable zone. The early modern navigators refined this view by following the lead of the fifteenth-century Portuguese chronicler Gomes Eanes de Zurara who split Africa in his *Chronicle of Guinea* (1453) into the 'land of the Moors' (northern Africa) and the 'land of the Blacks' (Guinea), a kind of inhabited torrid zone, with the Senegal River as the dividing line.[8] This ethnic division held sway until well into a later period. John Pory, the English editor of Leo Africanus, for example, confirmed in 1600 that the Senegal river 'maketh a separation betweene nations of sundrie colours: for the people on this side are of a dead ash-colour, leane, and of a small stature; but on the farther side they are exceeding blacke, of tall and manly stature, and very well proportioned'.[9] By

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[6] Ibid.

[7] See Martin W. Lewis and Kären E. Wigen, *The Myth of Continents. A Critique of Metageography* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997), pp. 21-46.

[8] See Josiah Blackmore, *Moorings. Portuguese Expansion and the Writing of Africa* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), pp. 15-16.

[9] John Pory, 'A general description of all Africa', preface to Leo Africanus, *A Geographical Historie of Africa*, trans. Pory (London: Georg Bishop, 1600), p. 4.

1600 knowledge of Africa's southern coast had been considerably advanced in the wake of the late fifteenth-century circumnavigations of the Cape by Bartolomeu Dias and Vasco da Gama, but such endeavours were not immediately paralleled by explorations of the African interior.

Two maps of Africa printed in sixteenth-century Europe helped more than any others to give the continent its modern visual and conceptual shape.[10] The first of these was a map by Sebastian Münster, 'the earliest, readily available printed map to show the entire continent of Africa'[11] (fig. 1), first published in 1540 and included in Münster's popular *Cosmography* between 1544 and 1578. The second appeared three decades later as part of an entirely new type of book: the cartographic atlas. The first edition of Ortelius's *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* (1570) contained 70 regional, national, and continental maps, including 'one of the cornerstone maps of Africa'[12] (fig. 2), which quickly supplanted Münster's old map in popular demand. (The latter's fate was to be eventually replaced by an Ortelian derivative in editions of the *Cosmography* from 1588 onwards.) Both maps shaped the image of Africa for European viewers throughout the second half of the sixteenth century, and both are representative examples of the 'new geography' that had exploded the ancient geographical paradigms associated with the classical and medieval works of Herodotus, Pliny and Mandeville.[13] Despite their evident novelty, however, both maps still invested in the 'old cosmography' and made it a residual part of the sixteenth-century cartographic discourse about Africa.

On Münster's map (fig. 1) these connections are most directly visible. Africa is cast as an imaginative visual blend of exotic animals, monster-like fish, and mythical rivers. Sub-Saharan Africa appears as little more than a shrivelled appendix; the south is almost completely filled by a huge elephant. The names of the ancient African kingdoms are scattered across the surface of the map but toponyms are relatively scarce, and generically exotic creatures—parrots in the Congo region; a one-eyed giant or cyclops cowering in the Bight of Biafra—fill the map with content instead. The cyclops

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[10] The latest overview of early maps of Africa is provided by Richard L. Betz, *The Mapping of Africa. A Cartobibliography of Printed Maps of the African Continent up to 1700*, Utrecht Studies in the History of Cartography 7 ('t Goy-Houten: Hes & de Graaf, 2007). For related earlier works see Oscar I. Norwich, *Maps of Africa. An Illustrated and Annotated Carto-Bibliography* (Johannesburg: Ad. Donker, 1983), republished as *Norwich's Maps of Africa*, ed. Jeffrey Stone (Vermont: Terra Nova, 1997); Ronald Vere Tooley, *Collector's Guide to Maps of the African Continent and Southern Africa* (London: Carta Press, 1969); and Egon Klemp, *Afrika auf Karten vom 12. bis 18. Jahrhundert* (Leipzig: Ed. Leipzig, 1968).
[11] Betz, p. 83. Betz discusses the map in full on pp. 83-94.
[12] Ibid., p. 122. Betz discusses the map in full on pp. 118-25.
[13] See Gillies, pp. 1-39.

advertises the affinity between this map and the ancient geographic imaginary through his kinship with the league of monstrous creatures that Pliny had described in his *Natural History*: the many-armed, double-faced or long-necked dwellers in the outer reaches of the earth, staples of medieval works dealing in geography, cosmography and travel. Such figures still populated many print versions of the Ptolemaic world map published in the fifteenth century, and their persistence indicates that the moral authority vested in the ancient sources was not easily disputed. Instead it remained one of the geographer's principal duties to supply working definitions of cultural otherness: the margins of the world are zones of a diffuse exoticism, beyond the borders of the *oikumene* or ancient 'house-world', where physical difference almost always serves as an indicator of moral transgression.

At first sight Ortelius's Africa (fig. 2) severs all these ancient connections. The map is couched in the modern cartographic idiom of longitude and latitude, secure coastal borders and dense toponymic coverage. Its share in the *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* makes it part of one of 'the new geography's most monumental statements'.[14] Yet even this map still features ancient legends such as the realm of the mighty Christian king, 'magnus princeps Presbiter Iones', just north of the equator, and the 'Amazonum regio' further south in the African interior. These mythic flashes in the midst of the ostensible modernity of this map clearly inspired contemporaries, as the recorded response of one prominent early modern reader confirms. A character in Christopher Marlowe's second *Tamburlaine* play, imagining a triumphant march throughout the whole of Africa, delivers a 20-line speech in Act 1 that includes 14 different toponyms and geographical references to African locations, including direct mentions of Prester John and the kingdom of the Amazons.[15] When the critic Ethel Seaton matched this speech to Ortelius's map in 1924, she could show that the string of placenames Marlowe weaves together corresponds one-to-one to his cartographic source.[16] The map provides the launchpad for the imaginative appropriation of African space, as both the atlas (Ortelius's *Theatrum*) and the theatre (soon a 'globe' in Southwark) generate visions of imperial power that enable Marlowe's character effortlessly to pass all temporal and

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[14] Ibid., p. 35.

[15] See Christopher Marlowe, *Tamburlaine,* part 2, in *The Complete Plays*, ed. J.B. Steane (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969), 1.6.59-78. See also my *Maps and the Writing of Space in Early Modern England and Ireland* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), pp. 15-20.

[16] See Ethel Seaton, 'Marlowe's Map' [1924], in *Marlowe: A Collection of Critical Essays*, Twentieth-Century Views, ed. Clifford Leech (Eaglewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1964), pp. 36-56. See also John Gillies's criticism of Seaton's approach (pp. 52-3).

spatial barriers. The map appears less as a medium of pragmatic orientation in space than as a catalyst for the electric experience of intoxicating expansion.

Marlowe's Tamburlaine is an eloquent witness to the lingering authority of the ancient geography in other respects as well. He still found it necessary, in 1592, to 'confute those blind geographers' that divided the world, as Ptolemy and the medieval makers of the mappaemundi had done, into 'triple regions'[17] (ie, the three continents, Asia, Africa and Europe), arranged around the spiritual centre of Jerusalem. His aggressive denunciation of this world view only confirms the pervasive influence of such seemingly outdated geographical concepts.[18] Other examples of the continuing respect for the ancient sources include Sir Walter Ralegh, who reported in 1596 that headless men with eyes in their shoulders and mouths in their breasts, such as Herodotus and Mandeville had described, were living in Guyana, though he was careful to add that he had not seen any of them personally.[19] Even Münster's *Cosmography*, which remained in print until 1628 (longer, in fact, than Ortelius's *Theatrum*), continued to present ancient and modern world maps side by side in its seventeenth-century editions, as did many other geographical works.

Shakespeare is another seventeenth-century witness to the force of the ancient geography. In the biographical fragment Othello offers up in front of the Venetian senate, when pressed to explain how a noble white lady like Desdemona could have possibly been won over by 'what she feared to look on' (1.3.98),[20] he explains how his travels took him precisely through the marginal wastelands of a Plinian geography— 'antres vast and deserts idle, / Rough quarries, rocks and hills whose heads touch heaven' (1.3.141-2)—a monstrous periphery beyond the civilized world where he stood face to face with 'the cannibals that each other eat, / The Anthropophagi, and men whose heads / Do grow beneath their shoulders' (1.3.144-6). When Othello later in the play declares that 'a horned man's a monster, and a beast' (4.1.62), he is not only describing himself as a cuckold and duped lover but also as a wild creature or beast with real horns growing on his head, advertising his affiliation with the deformed monsters he met in the fabled regions beyond the civilized world.

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[17] Marlowe, *Tamburlaine*, part 1, ed. Steane, 4.4.81-2.

[18] See my '*Tamburlaine*, Sacred Space, and the Heritage of Medieval Cartography', *Reading the Medieval in Early Modern England*, ed. David Matthews and Gordon McMullan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 143-58.

[19] See Sir Walter Ralegh, *Discoverie of the Large, Rich, and Bewtifvl Empire of Guiana* (London: Robert Robinson, 1596), pp. 69-70.

[20] All *Othello* quotations are taken from William Shakespeare, *Othello*, The Arden Shakespeare, ed. E.A.J. Honigmann (Walton-on-Thames, Surrey: Thomas Nelson, 1997).

Othello has often been connected to *Oroonoko* in criticism, and for good reason: the two titular heroes are possibly the most famous African characters in seventeenth-century English literature, and the affinities between them far exceed assonance and alliteration. Central to the comparison between the two has been their 'race', less often their 'space'.[21] The distinction between 'race' and 'space' is to some extent artificial, since neither concept can be entirely separated from the other. Ethnic difference blends into the geographic description of foreign or 'exotic' lands as much as specific spatial properties are seen to define human character and temperament. Othello and Oroonoko are separated by over eight decades, yet the parallels between them are strikingly apparent: both Shakespeare's 'moor of Venice' and Behn's 'royal slave' share a 'natural' nobility and dignity, both are military heroes, both tragically fall victim to European treachery, both begin as romantic lovers and end up murdering their wives, both finally relapse into 'wildness', and neither survives the tale that encompasses their imaginative existence. These similarities should not, however, obscure some important discontinuities between both characters: while Othello is filtered through the prism of an ancient Mediterranean geography, Oroonoko is conceived within a new Atlantic context;[22] while Othello starts the play as an African outsider in Europe in the service of a Christian ruler, Oroonoko is initially depicted in his own proper environment, heir to the throne of an African kingdom; while Othello makes a tragic mistake based on a moral misjudgement, Oroonoko remains morally blameless throughout; and while Othello is generically a traveller, Oroonoko would have never morphed into one had circumstances not conspired against him.[23]

Perhaps the principal difference between the two characters, as John Gillies has argued, is their choice of sexual partner: while Othello is 'transgressively' paired with Desdemona, Oroonoko is 'decorously'[24] paired with Imoinda, the 'beautiful black Venus',[25] who shares Oroonoko's race and class. For Gillies, Othello's clandestine

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[21] See Margaret Ferguson, 'Transmuting *Othello*: Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko*', in *Cross-Cultural Performances: Differences in Women's Re-Visions of Shakespeare*, ed. Marianne Novy (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1993), pp. 15-49; and Thomas Cartelli, *Repositioning Shakespeare. National Formations, Postcolonial Appropriations* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), pp. 123-46. For a comparative reading focused on the connections between character and geography, see Gillies, pp. 26-30.
[22] On *Oroonoko* in an Atlantic context, see Kate Chedgzoy, *Women's Writing in the British Atlantic World. Memory, Place and History, 1550-1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 168-97.
[23] See also Gallagher, p. 17.
[24] The terms are John Gillies's (p. 26).
[25] Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko and Other Writings*, ed. Paul Salzman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 12.

marriage is more than a breach of social decorum.[26] The moral imperative implicit in Othello's *errant* identity as an 'extravagant and wheeling stranger / Of here and everywhere' (1.1.134-5) equates generic homelessness and promiscuity almost inevitably with the violation of moral, sexual and—importantly—geographical *limits*. Inherent in Othello's imaginative being is a tragic contradiction between his inner nobility and what Mary Douglas would have called the 'pollution danger'[27] he represents to Venetian society. Oroonoko's fate, by contrast, is entirely unnecessary, as he falls victim to the racist system of a slave economy epitomized in the colonizers' failure to honour the dignity and *gravitas* of a natural born prince. That Oroonoko travels no longer through the 'ancient poetic geography'[28] that governed Shakespeare's constructions of otherness, but through abstract, quantifiable space measured in distance, scale, number and time, is confirmed by his fascination for the 'globes and maps and mathematical discourses and instruments'[29] that the English captain produces in Coromantine, which lure Oroonoko into thinking of the white man as an honest friend and partner in conversation, before he is revealed as a slave trader intent on nothing but profit. His maps are both cause and condition of Oroonoko's deportation into slavery.[30]

Othello, on the other hand, confirms in his wooing of Desdemona that he is entirely ignorant of the new geography. His geographic existence is that of an 'erring Barbarian' (1.3.356), as Iago thinks, a wanderer between the worlds without a recognized home, destiny, or point of origin. His lack of a definable place in Venetian society—Othello's generic 'placelessness', shifting essence, and transgressive being—is mirrored in his undefinable skin colour, which escapes all clarity of description: it is ungraspable, 'impure', meandering between shades of light brown and dark or black, as Iago's and Roderigo's racist references to him in the opening scene of the play indicate: 'thicklips' (1.1.65), 'black ram' (1.1.87), 'barbary horse' (1.1.110). This in-betweenness appears especially pronounced when compared to the precise definition, cultural fixity and appropriate ethnic classification of Oroonoko, reflected in his social class and decorum, as well as his extreme blackness of skin, described as exact, precious and pure, 'of

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[26] See Gillies, pp. 26-7.
[27] See Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger. An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London: Routledge, 1966). Gillies uses Douglas's terminology on pp. 27-8.
[28] Gillies, p. 28.
[29] Behn, ed. Salzman, p. 33.
[30] See my 'Staying Afloat. Literary Shipboard Encounters from Shakespeare to Equiano', in *Sea Changes. Historicizing the Ocean*, ed. Bernhard Klein and Gesa Mackenthun (New York: Routledge, 2004), pp. 91-109 (pp. 100-101).

perfect ebony, or polished jet'.[31] This striking shift in ethnic description, as I aim to show in what follows, has distinct cartographic resonances. Seventeenth-century maps of Africa, following on from Münster and Ortelius, similarly begin to fix people in space as well as in ethnicity, custom and skin colour, by turning the continent's spaces into compartmentalized zones, pushing into controlled visibility the obscure, wandering entities of human geography, 'extravagant and wheeling stranger[s] / Of here and everywhere'.

Marginal Figures

For more than a century after the publication of Ortelius's atlas, the toponymic surface of the African continent that Marlowe exploited showed few signs of change on European maps (with the exception of the coastal placenames that were crucial to European navigation). Much happened, however, to their representational frame. Probably the most significant event in the European cartography of Africa in the seventeenth century was the publication of Willem Janszoon Blaeu's wall map of 1608 (fig. 3), part of a quartet of wall maps depicting the four continents, a work 'of such importance that for the next 100 years numerous mapmakers throughout Europe diligently copied this map, both in design and in content.'[32] The purpose of the map is reflected in its massive size (c. 1.20m by 1.70m): designed to hang in the houses of patricians, wealthy merchants, clergy, etc, the map documents the sum of geographical knowledge about Africa circulating in Europe at the beginning of the seventeenth century.[33]

Compared to Ortelius's map, its most obvious innovative feature is the addition of decorative and explanatory frames: in a process of multiple encasements Africa is surrounded by city views, figurative portraits, and a descriptive geographical text. The element that most compels attention in the context of this essay is the addition of sixteen mini-galleries depicting the people of Africa on either side of the map image: standing under arches in groups of two, three or four, are not *monoculi* or elephants but the inhabitants of the various kingdoms, countries and regions that make up the African continent. In the cartographic culture of Europe, such *cartes à figures*, depicting people

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[31] Behn, ed. Salzman, p. 12.
[32] Betz, p. 217.
[33] For a full documentation and analysis all four wall maps see Günter Schilder, *Monumenta Cartographica Neerlandica V: Tien wandkaarten van Blaeu en Visscher / Ten Wall Maps by Blaeu and Visscher* (Alphen aan den Rijn: Uitgeverij Canaletto, 1996), pp. 75-213.

alongside 'their' land, are prominent from the end of the sixteenth century onwards. Two Dutch cartographers, Jodocus Hondius and Pieter van den Keere, have been credited with the first use of this convention in 1595,[34] when they placed portraits of regional merchants and aristocrats into the margins of their wall map of Europe, thus turning it into a social space shared equally by trade and nobility.

Maps, of course, have never been devoid of decorative additions like arabesques, allegorical motifs, ornamental patterns or classical quotations. Oceans on maps frequently sport mythical sea creatures or ships. But such features are usually broad generalizations; they rarely make specific, targeted comments on the geographical space depicted. In *cartes à figures*, however, the rationale behind the inclusion of portraits is precisely to add local knowledge to the abstract contours of the land. When city views began to be included, the order of geographical space on such maps was constructed through the mental and material interaction between people, cities and nations or continents, resulting in a fusion of chorographic and geographical scales that caused widely disparate spatial data to coexist within the same frame of representation. Put differently, the map is a visual amalgamation of three separate genres: the costume manual, the city atlas and the national or continental map. This list could be extended in both directions: the earth as a whole is contained in the celestial globe, and even more detailed information on people and their bodies is available in the anatomical treatise. In his 1611 atlas of Britain, John Speed set the anatomically dissected and fragmented body in explicit analogy to the work of the mapmaker: 'here [in this atlas] first wee will (by Example of best Anatomists) propose to the view the *whole Body*, and *Monarchie* intire … and after will dissect and lay open the particular Members, Veines and Ioints, (I meane the Shires, Riuers, Cities, and Townes)'.[35]

The best known contemporary city atlas, from which most of the twelve views along the bottom of Blaeu's 1608 map of Africa are taken,[36] is Georg Braun and Frans Hogenberg's *Civitates Orbis Terrarum* (1572-1617), a six-volume collection of city views whose title already announces its conceptual affinity to Ortelius's world atlas, the *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*. Indeed, although its frame of reference is clearly

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[34] See Günter Schilder, *Monumenta Cartographica Neerlandica III* (Alphen aan den Rijn: Uitgeverij Canaletto, 1990), chapter IIIb: 'The Development of Decorative Borders on Dutch Wall Maps Before 1619', pp. 115-46. The 1595 map referred to in the text is a wall map of Europe in 15 sheets.
[35] John Speed, *The Theatre of the Empire of Great Britain* (London: Iohn Sudbury & George Humble, 1611), sig. E1r (Speed's italics).
[36] See Schilder, *Monumenta Cartographica Neerlandica V*, p. 150, for a list of known models and sources of these 12 city views.

chorographic, the project of the *Civitates* atlas was cosmographic in intent: the overall aim of the collection was to show 'how artful master builders have decorated *the entire earthly sphere* with cities and towns.'[37] The purpose of the city atlas in the narrow sense was to furnish the visual proof of historical competence in civilization—cities testify to humankind's ability to give undefined space a recognizable and socially meaningful structure. Like world and city atlas, the costume manual was a visual form that enabled the comprehension of geographical space through its regional variation. Many of the sources for the portraits Blaeu included on this and the other three wall maps in his 1608 series have been traced to contemporary costume manuals,[38] and the engraver Hessel Gerritsz, who provided the etchings for Blaeu's map, followed their pictorial conventions very closely. The express purpose of the costume manual, as Caspar Rutz explained in the preface to one notable example of the genre, Jean-Jacques Boissard's *Habitus Variarum Orbis Gentium* (1581), was to annotate and illustrate maps: since the 'painted world' of modern cartographers displayed many details of landscape, it is only appropriate that man himself should be depicted 'in his own costume and habit', so that 'the mental dispositions and local customs can be represented and easily recognized.'[39] The abstract shape of the land should be read against the cultural and moral profile of its inhabitants; regional costume—understood as a fixed cultural code, not as a transitory fashion statement—offers a visually recognizable structure for this purpose.

On Blaeu's map the portraits link up with the image of the land in two distinct ways. On the one hand, they literally serve to re-inhabit the empty, depopulated space of the map, evoke certain regional forms of spatial practice, and gesture at what cannot be

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[37] Georg Braun and Frans Hogenberg, *Beschreibung und Contrafactur der vornembster Stätt der Welt* (Cologne: Heinrich von Ach, 1574), preface, n.p. (my translation and emphasis). 'Wie … kunstreiche Bawmeister den gantzen erdenkreiß … mit Stäten und flecken verziert …'

[38] See Schilder, *Monumenta Cartographica Neerlandica V*, pp. 105-6, pp. 124-8, pp. 147-52, and pp. 160-68. Since the publication of Schilder's pioneering study, I have been able to identify several further sources (see note 52 below).

[39] Jean-Jacques Boissard, *Habitus Variarum Orbis Gentium* (Cologne: Caspar Rutz, 1581), preface: 'Nachdem heytiger tag / vil / und mancherley Bücher beschrieben / auch zu Kupffer gestechen werden … welliche auß denn Carttis / oder Mappen / von einer abgemalten Welt sich berichts holen / unnd lernen müssen / Gedünckt mich dasselb nit ein geringe / sonder notwendige nutzbare arbeit sein … Wann denn Menschen / dem alle ding zu notturft / vnnd lust erschaffen sein / mit seiner selbst Kleidung / vnnd dracht fürbilden … vnnd durch die Kleidung die gemütter / vnnd sitten / gemeinlich abgenommen werden / vnnd leichtlich zuerkennen ist'. ['Since today many and diverse books are written and engraved in copper … which need to gather information and learn from a painted world in cards and maps, it seems to me not a small but a necessary work … if man himself, for whose use and pleasure all things have been created, is pictured in his own costume and habit … so that through costume the mental dispositions and local customs can be represented and easily recognized' (my translation).]

represented in maps: the lived social spaces of local 'users'.[40] For the abstract image of the continent is to a large degree the result of geometric calculation, the portraits of the people, however, imply an immediate and direct confrontation with the social spaces they both live and define. On the other hand, the technology of cartographic representation is transferred from the surface of the land to the people themselves: just as the entire continent can be pressed into a coherent visual form, people can be ordered, classified and exhibited in discrete taxonomies and ornamental galleries. In contrast to Münster's cyclops, Blaeu's bodies do not form part of the image of the land but define their own discursive space in relation to this land. They are no longer symbolic projections of a diffuse periphery onto the land but socially and geographically clearly defined individuals: the captions describe them, for instance, as 'women from Guinea with servants', a 'Congolese soldier with wife', 'inhabitants of the Cape of Good Hope', 'Moroccans', or—encoding a classic patriarchal motif found in several costume manuals—'virgin, widow, wife' in Ethiopia (with a turbaned male figure standing just to the right of the trio).[41] The figures are thus defined through their gender, their marital status, their regional roots (like Oroonoko; unlike Othello), and their social identity and rank: merchants, dukes, pilgrims, soldiers, even a king (of Madagascar) are among the social types represented.

One notable feature is the predominant arrangement of these figures into groups of three or four people of varying gender and age (four babies and one child are included in total)—out of sixteen images, only five portray couples.[42] The significance of this arrangement arises from its relative rarity; subsequent maps of this genre depict almost exclusively couples (mainly, but not always, male-female pairings). Figure 4 shows what was probably the most successful African map of the seventeenth century, also by Willem Janszoon Blaeu and clearly based on his earlier wall map.[43] Printed in many editions and variants from 1617 onwards, its third state is included, for instance, in the century's most expensive publication project, the 12-volume *Atlas Maior* (Amsterdam

[40] On the concept of social space see Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* [1974], trans. Donald Nicolson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991); and Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* [1974], trans. Steven Randall (Berkeley et al.: University of California Press, 1988).
[41] See galleries 3, 6 and 7 in the left margin, and 1 and 4 in the right margin (counting from the top). The original captions are: 'Guinearum Mvlieres et ancilla', 'Miles Congonensis cum femina', 'Promontorii bonæ spæi habitatores', 'Marocchi', 'Virgo, vidva, mvlier Afra. Æthiops'.
[42] The five couples are: 'Miles Congonensis cum femina'; 'Promontorii bonæ spæi habitatores' (two men); 'Fezani'; 'Peregrini euntes ad Meccam' (two men); and 'Abissini'.
[43] For descriptions of this map see Günter Schilder, *Monumenta Cartographica Neerlandica VII* (Alphen aan den Rijn: Uitgeverij Canaletto, 2000), pp. 116-9; and Betz, pp. 225-8.

1662/1665) by Joan Blaeu, son of Willem. In contrast to the 1608 wall map, all the marginal figures on this map appear as couples, leading Valerie Traub to see 'a specifically *heterosexual* idiom'[44] at work in the map and a drive towards marital union as the normative visual paradigm for figurative portraits. (The point is astute but not quite accurate, since two of the ten couples on the map of Africa are actually male-male pairings.[45])

Equally significant is the new logic behind the general arrangement of the figures on the map. The 1608 wall map, from which all of these portraits are derived, foregrounds the Zuraran discourse of a continent split along ethno-religious lines into a 'land of Moors' and a 'land of Blacks', and prioritizes this division over the geographical connections between people and land: seven out of eight galleries on the right depict north and east African Muslim societies, with all figures shown fully dressed wearing kaftans, robes, cloaks or shirts, while only the bottom gallery ('Cafres in Mozambique') shows four black-skinned Africans (one a baby), of whom two are depicted naked, and two wear only a piece of cloth. On the left, all galleries feature sub-Saharan people, and all are depicted with large parts of their body exposed. The arrangement makes white dominate on the right, and black on the left (in the uncoloured version of the map). Within each column, the countries are shown in the geographical sequence suggested by the map (the trajectories are northwest to east and south on the right; west to south and east on the left), but this arrangement is secondary to the overriding division of Africa into two separate spheres, one Moorish, one Black.

By contrast, the 1617 map operates a model of geographical indexing in which the images from top to bottom correspond to the location of cultures and countries along Africa's north-south axis, resulting in a clear hierarchy of colour and culture: light-skinned North Africans in exquisite costume are placed at the top (Moroccans on the left; Egyptians on the right); down the frame on either side the nakedness, blackness, and 'wildness' of the figures gradually increase, with the 'lowest' point reached at the Cape, whose inhabitants (the Khoikhoi) are shown eating the raw entrails of dead cattle.[46] The example of the 1608 wall map, on which the same image of the Khoikhoi

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[44] Valerie Traub, 'Mapping the Global Body', in *Early Modern Visual Culture: Representation, Race, and Empire in Renaissance England*, ed. Peter Erickson and Clark Hulse (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), pp. 44-97 (p. 71).

[45] These two are the portraits depicting merchants in Guinea and inhabitants of the Cape of Good Hope ('Mercatores in Guinea'; 'Cap: bonæ Spæi habitatores').

[46] Accusations of coprophagy against the Khoikhoi were frequently made by early European commentators: 'Numerous writers claimed that the Khoikhoi consumed the cattle's intestines raw, or

was placed in the left-hand column, one image up from the bottom, demonstrates that while assumptions about 'savagery' at the Cape had not changed, the carefully choreographed visual descent into darkness, exposed skin and revolting eating habits was a deliberate aesthetic choice, not a necessity dictated by the 'facts' of geography. Rather, the arrangement follows what Ernst van den Boogart has recently called a 'rough and ready formula': '"the more dress the more civility, the more nudity the more savagery"'.[47] The map also suggests that the toponym 'Africa' was beginning to be equated in European minds predominantly with the signifiers 'black' and 'nude', as the quantitative changes indicate: sixteen galleries have been reduced to ten, with only three representing Moorish Africa, and seven depicting black Africa (as opposed to seven and nine galleries respectively on the 1608 wall map). The popularity of Blaeu's 1617 map ensured that its colour paradigm dominated the European cartography of Africa throughout the seventeenth century, with the portraits allocating people to their 'proper' spaces, and attaching moral value to those spaces.

A further variant of the African *carte à figures* makes this point even more directly. The 1614 map of Africa by Pieter van den Keere, 'the earliest Africa map with decorative borders to be published in folio format',[48] and the continental map included in John Speed's *Prospect of the Most Famous Parts of the World* (1626)—an entirely derivative, English version of the world atlas (fig. 5)—both include portraits based almost exclusively on Blaeu's templates in the left and right margins.[49] The sequential arrangement of images in relation to the land is identical to the 1617 example. But in one feature both maps differ significantly from Blaeu's: the pictorial galleries are all populated by single figures. Individuals stand under the arches that on Blaeu's maps framed either crowds or couples; social space is not defined in these examples as a collective experience. On Speed's map, the graphic changes follow a clear pattern: in each of the couple-occupied galleries that he found on Blaeu's 1617 map, he simply left

nearly raw, along with the excrement inside.' George Steinmetz, *The Devil's Handwriting. Postcoloniality and the German Colonial State in Qingdao, Samoa, and Southwest Africa* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2007), p. 83. See also Andrew B. Smith, 'Different Facets of the Crystal: Early European Images of the Khoikhoi at the Cape, South Africa', *Goodwin Series*, 7 (1993), pp. 8-20 (p. 10).
[47] Ernst van den Boogart, 'De Bry's Africa', in *Inszenierte Welten / Staging New Worlds*, ed. Susanna Burghartz (Basle: Schwabe, 2004), pp. 95-155 (p. 97).
[48] Betz, p. 221. The map is reproduced on p. 220.
[49] Speed uses only Blaeu's figure portraits; van den Keere uses Blaeu for five of his eight galleries, relying on Jodocus Hondius's 1598 wall map for the remaining three. On the wall map by Hondius, see Günter Schilder, *Monumenta Cartographica Neerlandica VIII* (Alphen aan den Rijn: Uitgeverij Canaletto, 2007), pp. 231-5; and Betz, pp. 185-6.

out the second (usually the female) figure.[50] The remaining individuals are attached to regions or countries via their captions, and thus geographically defined but no longer given a social or any other identity apart from their generic 'race'. This individualized version of the African *carte à figure* was popular in Britain; the van den Keere map served as the model for two continental maps printed in 1658 and 1668;[51] further derivates were published in several eighteenth-century atlases.

Mapping Blackness

The variations between the different versions and derivatives of the 1608 wall map printed throughout the seventeenth century are prefigured by the changes made to the visual sources in Blaeu's Amsterdam workshop during the original production of this map. The graphic differences between these sources and the nine images of sub-Saharan Africans that appeared first on the wall map, and then with slight alterations on practically all continental maps of Africa over the next century, reveal in detail how these maps performed their cultural work. Eight of these nine images probably came to Blaeu's engraver, Hessel Gerritsz, through the early volumes of the de Bry brothers' *India Orientalis* series (the 'lesser voyages' or *Petits Voyages*), though he could have also found seven of them in the books from which the de Brys themselves took their visuals.[52] The image of the inhabitants of Congo ('Magnates in Congo'), for example,

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[50] See Betz, p. 242. Traub argues that most of Speed's maps, even though they display single figures in the margins, actually portray couples, because 'the marital idiom is reasserted, with heterosexual spouses divided from one another by the geography of nation or empire' ('Mapping the Global Body', p. 73). While this is true for most of the country maps in Speed's atlas, it is not the case on his continental map of Africa, in which only three out of ten portraits display women, and none of the ten figures are socially or geographically linked.

[51] See Betz, pp. 302-3, for the 1658 map by Robert Walton; and pp. 350-51, for the 1668 map by John Overton. See also the Frederick de Wit variant published in Amsterdam in 1660 and described by Betz on pp. 321-3.

[52] The nine images I am including in this count are all eight galleries in the left-hand margin, and the bottom one on the right. The sources are the following: for galleries 2 to 4 on the left (counting from the top), either Johan Theodor and Johan Israel de Bry, *Sechster Theil der Orientalischen Indien. Warhafftige Historische Beschreibung deß gewaltigen Goltreichen Königreichs Guinea* (Frankfurt: W. Richtern, 1603) [= volume six of *India Orientalis*], plates 2, 3, and 20, or Pieter de Marees, *Beschryvinghe ende historische verhael vant Gout Koninckrijk van Gunea* (Amsterdam: Cornelisz Claesz, 1602); for galleries 5 and 6, either Johan Theodor and Johan Israel de Bry, *Warhaffte und Eigentliche Beschreibung des Königreichs Congo in Africa* (Frankfurt: J. Saur, 1597) [= volume one of *India Orientalis*], plates 3, 4, and 5, or Filippo Pigafetta, *Relatione del reame di Congo e delle circonvicine contrade* (Rome: Bartolomeo Grassi, 1591); for gallery 7, Johan Theodor and Johan Israel de Bry, *Dritter Theil indiae orientalis* (Frankfurt: Matthaeum Becker, 1599) [= volume three of *India Orientalis*], plate 7 (the image is loosely based on, but not a direct copy of, an image of Cape dwellers in Willem Lodewijcksz, *D' Eerste boeck. Historie van Indien, waer inne verhaelt is de avontueren die de Hollandtsche schepen bejeghent zijn* [Amsterdam: n.p., 1598]); for gallery 8, either volume three of *India Orientalis*, plate 11, or Lodewijcksz, *D' Eerste boeck*; for the bottom gallery on the right, either Johan Theodor and Johan Israel de Bry, *Ander Theil der Orientalischen Indien* (Frankfurt: J. Saur, 1598) [= volume two of *India*

wandered from Filippo Pigafetta's 1591 Italian account based on the Portuguese merchant Duarte Lopez' residency in Congo (1578-83), to volume one of *India Orientalis*, first published in German in 1597.[53] Gerritsz could have used either one of these books, or both, since the illustrations differ little between them. His precise source is less important than the manner in which the image was altered on the map. In both Pigafetta and the de Brys, the Congolese (male and female) have white skin, European faces, and 'are neither "black" nor represented with negroid physiognomies'.[54] On Blaeu's map, however, with the images torn from their narrative context, the Congolese have been given black skins and distinctly negroid faces.[55]

The reasons for these changes are not immediately obvious. The original illustrations in Pigafetta are unlikely to have been based on eyewitness observation, which has led van den Boogart to argue that the designer may have followed the textual account,[56] in which the Congolese were distinguished from the Nubians and Guineans as being neither 'deformed' nor having 'thick lips', resembling instead the Portuguese in appearance with 'large, narrow and varied' faces.[57] But Pigafetta also gave the Congolese black or olive-coloured skin and curly hair, which the designer ignored. It is

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Orientalis], plate 3, or Jan Huygen van Linschoten, *Itinerario, Voyage ofte Schipvaert van Jan Huygen van Linschoten naer Oost ofte Portugaels Indien* (Amsterdam: Cornelis Claesz, 1596). The most complete list of the sources of the de Bry engravings is appendix 3, 'The origins of the engravings in the De Bry collection', in Michiel van Groesen, *The Representations of the Overseas World in the de Bry Collection of Voyages* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2008), pp. 509-22. The source for the image on the top left ('Senagenses') has not yet been identified, though the female on the right of the image may have been taken from the earlier wall map of Africa by Jodocus Hondius (1598), which includes the portrait of a 'Fæmina Senege', itself possibly a variation of the image of a 'Fille Moresque esclaue en Algier' in Nicolas de Nicolay, *Quatre premiers livres de navigations et de pérégrinations orientales* (Lyon: Guillaume Roville, 1568), following p. 19. The sources for the other seven images on the 1608 wall map, not all of which have been identified, include Enea Vico, *Diversarum gentium nostrae aetatis* (Venice, 1558); Ferdinando Bertelli, *Omnium fere gentium nostrae aetatis habitus* (Venice, 1563); Nicolay, *Quatre premiers livres*; Hans Weigel, *Habitus praecipuorum populorum* (Nuremberg, 1577); and Abraham de Bruyn, *Omnium pene Euopae, Asiae, Aphricae atque Americae gentium habitus* (n.p., 1581). Images were frequently copied between these various works.
[53] See also Schilder, *Monumenta Cartographica Neerlandica V*, pp. 146-7.
[54] van den Boogart, p. 106.
[55] See also Schilder, *Monumenta Cartographica Neerlandica V*, pp. 147-8.
[56] See van den Boogart, p. 96, p. 106.
[57] Pigafetta, pp. 6-7: 'Gl'huomini sono negri, & le donne, & alcuni manco tirando più all'Oliuastro, & hanno li capelli crespi neri, & alcuni anco rossi; la statura de gl'huomini è di mezzana grandezza, & leuatone il colore nero sono à Portoghesi somiglianti: le pupille de gl'occhi di varij colori nere, & del color del Mare, & le labra non grosse, como li nubi, & altri negri, & cosi li volti loro sono grossi, & sottili, & varij come in queste contrade, non come li neri di Nubia, & di Guinea, che sono difformi.' ['The men are black, and so are the women, though some are verging more towards olive-coloured, and their hair is curly and black, some also have red hair; in stature the men are of medium height, and apart from the black colour they resemble the Portuguese: the pupils of the eyes are variously coloured, and of the colour of the sea, and the lips are not thick, as those of the Nubians and other Negroes, and that way their faces are large, narrow, and varied as they are in these parts, not like those of the blacks in Nubia and Guinea, who are deformed' (my translation).]

more likely that both Pigafetta's designer and the de Brys were working within a set of received norms and practices that governed the dissemination of images in print,[58] and that neither of them was particularly interested in race and ethnicity as key signifiers of alterity, prioritizing instead cultural and social markers of difference. The approach of the de Brys was reasonably consistent in this respect across their published voyage accounts. On their engravings of the John White watercolours, for example, which they used for their images of the north American Algonquians published in the *India Occidentalis* (or *America*) series, they deliberately altered the source and 'Europeanized' their subject matter. Critics have accused the de Brys in this instance of 'erasing the alterity of native bodies and making them more familiar, and aesthetically pleasing, to European viewers'[59] but arguably, the representational templates which the de Brys applied to the depiction of foreign faces and bodies allowed them to deflect attention away from race and focus instead on nuances of dress, custom, and culture. Maps of Africa are doing the opposite work: alterity is not erased but created, with recourse not to eyewitness accounts and images drawn *ad vivum* but to established and racially inflected visual tropes about sub-Saharan Africans.

The kingdom of Congo, whose rulers had converted to christianity at the end of the fifteenth century, may perhaps be expected to receive preferred treatment in European representations, which in turn could have led Blaeu into making these changes in order to ensure overall visual coherence on his map. But this was not the case: other images were subjected to the same process of graphic redaction. To cite one more striking example, the image of the inhabitants of the Cape is based on a plate included in volume three of the de Brys' *India Orientalis* series (1599; fig. 6),[60] in which a coprophagic Cape dweller is shown in the centre of the image standing next to the carcass of a dead oxen, being handed raw entrails by one of the Europeans who have expertly performed

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[58] See Stephanie Pratt, 'Truth and Artifice in the Visualization of Native Peoples: From the Time of John White to the Beginning of the Eighteenth Century', in *European Visions: American Voices*, ed. Kim Sloan (London: The British Museum, 2009), pp. 33-40.

[59] Traub, p. 63.

[60] Michiel von Groesen lists this image as an invention of the de Brys in his appendix on the origins of the de Bry engravings (*The Representations of the Overseas World*, p. 517). This is correct in terms of the visual statement made in the image, though details of the Cape dwellers' appearance are clearly copied from an image in Lodewijcksz, *D' Eerste boeck*, as von Groesen shows in his discussion in ibid., p. 180-81 (the Lodewijcksz image is reprinted on p. 182). The text of *India Orientalis*, volume 3, is based on Jan Huygen van Linschoten's travel accounts in which coprophagy at the Cape is described but not illustrated. The image has been reproduced before, eg in van Groesen, p. 183; in Walter Hirschberg, *Schwarzafrika*, Monumenta Ethnographica I (Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1962), p. 47, where it is mistakenly attributed to van Linschoten; and in Major R. Raven-Hart, *Before van Riebeeck. Callers at South Africa from 1488 to 1652* (Cape Town: Struik, 1976), facing p. 84, where it is mistakenly attributed to Willem Lodewijcksz.

the slaughter. In the background on the left, as the caption explains, four Khoikhoi are warming up the intestines in water on an ox-hide, before consuming them semi-raw. In Blaeu's gallery, the single Khoikhoi in the centre of the de Brys' image stands next to a mirror image of himself, white skin has become black, straight hair curly, and European facial features have turned negroid (fig. 7). Similar graphic changes can be identified for all other galleries (bar one[61]): formulaic European faces become exaggeratedly African, blackness is introduced through densely criss-crossing lines on the exposed skin of the African figures (and is further emphasized through the colour added after printing). And even though details of dress, jewelry, and weaponry are generally retained, these changes clearly serve to strengthen the implied cultural and civilizational gap between Africa and Europe. On the image of the Cape dwellers, they are particularly distorting, since the de Brys' caption made a point of emphasizing that the skin colour of the 'Hottentots' was not black but 'reddish-brown'.[62]

Significantly, when Aphra Behn described her hero's face in *Oroonoko*, the shift in image went the opposite way, as she took care to erase exactly this negroid image in the minds of her readers: '[Oroonoko's] nose was rising and Roman, instead of African and flat. His mouth, the finest shaped that could be seen, far from those great turned lips, which are so natural to the rest of the Negroes.'[63] The point here is not just that a tale based on an African character's inherent nobility required Behn to extract her black hero from the rigid racial categories maps had helped to establish, but also that these facial features only seemed 'natural' because visual depictions of sub-Saharan Africans such as those available on seventeenth-century maps had been persistently working to codify these representational conventions. The cartographic portrait that would fit Oroonoko's geographical and social origins most closely (the second gallery on the left of the 1608 wall map depicting a 'lord' of Guinea with attendants) was given exactly the 'Africanizing' treatment described above. It is important to note in this context that Blaeu's main source for the black African portraits on his maps, the image arsenal of the de Brys, which has proved 'a goldmine to scholars seeking visual material for the study

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[61] The one exception is the bottom gallery on the right ('Cafres in Mozambique'), the sources for which (see above, n. 51) already depict Africans with negroid facial features and black skin.
[62] Johan Theodor and Johan Israel de Bry, *Dritter Theil indiae orientalis*, plate 7. The caption reads: 'Dieses Volck ist zimlich kleiner Statur, von Farben rohtbraun, gehet ganz nackend' ['These people are of fairly small stature, reddish-brown in colour, and go completely naked' (my translation)].
[63] Behn, ed. Salzman, p. 12.

of Europe's attitudes toward foreign others',[64] may have actually influenced European attitudes to the non-European world in less significant ways than the work of cartography, which, through its wider dissemination and higher public visibility, had the potential of reaching much larger audiences. While the de Bry visuals of Africa certainly contained plenty of instances of African 'savagery', they did not, as a whole, follow a programme of systematic racial stereotyping and were not 'geared to a priori negative constructions of alterity.'[65] Maps made far more racially biassed statements about the alleged lack of civility in black Africa.

Geography and Difference

The argument that I have been working towards in my discussion of African maps is to suggest that there is a conceptual affinity between the uniqueness and clearly defined ethnic and racial identity of Behn's protagonist, and the rigid spatial categories through which maps are beginning to define the nexus between people and land, race and space, ethnicity and geography—exemplified nowhere more clearly than in the individually encased and exhibited figures on maps like van den Keere's and Speed's. The link is speculative to some extent, not least because the three examples of African *cartes à figures* I have discussed in this essay (figs. 3 to 5) do not form a neat chronological sequence but coexist throughout the seventeenth century. All three maps are also presentational items, existing as decorative wall hangings, single folio-sized sheets, or pages in glossy scholarly tomes, rather than as practical wayfinding tools, and thus reflect assumptions held by the sedentary classes, not necessarily by the voyagers and seafarers involved in first-hand encounters with non-European cultures.

But then the argument presented here depends neither on a linear development nor on the usefulness of these maps to travellers, but on the availability of various representational and visual tools that enabled maps to encode, taxonomize and contain forms of racial and ethnic difference. These tools were not developed exclusively with reference to Africa or non-European spaces more generally: the origin of the visual

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[64] Maureen Quilligan, 'Theodor De Bry's Voyages to the New and Old Worlds', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 41, no. 1 (2011), pp. 1-12 (p. 1).

[65] van den Boogart, p. 146. Alden T. Vaughan and Virginia Mason Vaughan argue that the situation was different in England, where the notion prevailed 'that sub-Saharan Africans were uniquely deficient in color, culture, and character'. See Vaughan and Vaughan, 'Before Othello: Elizabethan Representations of Sub-Saharan Africans', *William and Mary Quarterly*, 54, no. 1 (1997), pp. 19-44 (p. 42). The Vaughans draw mainly, though not exclusively, on fictional English descriptions of sub-Saharan Africans. With regard to non-fictional accounts, P.E.H. Hair has argued very differently in 'Attitudes to Africans in English Primary Sources on Guinea up to 1650', *History in Africa*, 26 (1999), pp. 43-68.

convention that places people in the margins of maps was the cartography of Europe, developed and refined in the Dutch mapmaking centres of the seventeenth century. But once these representational conventions were extended across the globe and applied to other ethnicities, ways of seeing and processing forms of geographical difference changed as a result. The example of European maps of Africa demonstrates that the amalgamation of topographical map, city view, and figure portrait in a single image developed a normative force in seventeenth-century cartography that could break down the unwieldy mass of geographical information about foreign lands to the smallest social and spatial unit—the individual body—and in the process made race an inherent component of the cartographic ordering and rationalizing of the world.

A similar move towards the presentation of geographical knowledge in the form of discrete, isolated entities can be observed elsewhere, for example on the title-page of Edmund Bohun's *Geographical Dictionary* (1688; fig. 8),[66] recycled from Peter Heylyn's identical frontispiece adorning his *Cosmographie* of 1652, on which all four continents are represented by single, ethnically and sartorially defined figures. The spatial personifications on the image are no longer traditional geographical allegories but figurative representations of the continents, separated into male and female, and characterized by local costume, insignia of royalty for the women, and (in the lower gallery) the regional warrior dress for the men. In yet another application of Zurara's ethnically motivated north-south split, Africa is represented by a turbaned north African male and a sub-Saharan woman (the latter portrayed with precisely the same facial features that Behn worked so hard to suppress in her fictional hero). Bohun's work is an alphabetical sequence of all known toponyms around the globe, that strives towards a 'more perfect knowledge of each Respective Place',[67] and processes geographical knowledge by listing, classifying and cataloguing. The title-page could work as the illustration of the comment made by another contemporary geographer, Robert Sibbald, who thought that through geography, 'all the face of the World is exposed to us', and that the world is 'a Theater, whereupon each act their Part, and … [represent] several Personages'.[68] Sibbald was a Scottish physician and geographer who summarized his praise for maps in 1683 when he wrote in the preface to one of his works that 'Man … cannot but find the advantages of *Geography*, by which we see all the parts of this great

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[66] Edmund Bohun, *A Geographical Dictionary ... of the Whole World* (London: Charles Brome, 1688).
[67] J.A. Bernard, preface to 1693 edition of Bohun's work, n.p.
[68] Robert Sibbald, *An Account of the Scottish Atlas, or The Description of Scotland, Ancient and Modern* (Edinburgh: David Lindsay et al., 1683), p. 3.

Machine, even which are most remote from us, and look upon these who are absent, as if they were present with us.'[69]

This is the mystery of maps: they make visible what otherwise remains hidden from human eyesight, and they bring together in one image and one unifying representational system the totality of spatial and social diversity on earth. 'Machine' implies structure and connectedness, and here has the principal meaning of the 'fabric of the world', or the 'universe'. But the metaphor works differently in the context of Behn's novel, which describes the inhuman, *mechanistic* workings of colonialism and the transatlantic slave trade. In *Oroonoko*, Behn exhibits a trained cartographic gaze right at the beginning of the novel when she divides the inhabitants of Suriname into three distinct groups: first, European settlers; second, the 'natives of that place', whom the colonists dare not 'command'; and third, those people the Europeans 'make use of there',[70] in other words, African slaves. With the same curiosity of the naturalist she offers accounts of Suriname's natural flora and fauna, the local customs, the country's wildlife and many of its animals. For contemporary geographers, the description of peoples and places, both at home and abroad, formed a subgenre of natural history. Sibbald's work focused on Scotland but once exported beyond the British Isles, the parameters and descriptive paradigms of this brand of national geography could easily be put to use in the service of a globally operating colonial 'machinery'. The system relied on images as much as on words, and it is in this sense that Oroonoko fell victim not only to a modern slave economy in which his nobility and moral virtue mattered little, but also to an uncomfortable alliance between literature and cartography.

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[69] Ibid.

[70] Behn, ed. Salzman, p. 6.

List of figures: