

**Adapting Whiteness:  
Katherine of Aragon in Shakespeare and Fletcher’s *All is True*  
and Starz’s *The Spanish Princess***

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ABSTRACT

The sources influencing Shakespeare’s representation of racialized queens continue to shape popular media representations of queenship. In this article, I argue that Juan Luis Vives’ *Instruction of a Christian Woman* influenced Shakespeare’s representation of Katherine of Aragon’s idealized whiteness in *All is True* (*Henry VIII*). Moreover, I show how Vives and Shakespeare in turn influence Starz’s 2019 miniseries, *The Spanish Princess*. Firstly, I show how Vives represents the domestic space of the royal household as a form of racial enclosure intended to manage the paradoxical confluence of the queen’s biological reproductivity and the social circulation of her image. Katherine’s patronage of Vives demonstrates her agency in cultivating her cult of queenship through gendered and racially charged notions of kinship, conduct, and labor. These tropes elevate the racial purity of the queen through and at the expense of the lower classes and enslaved peoples whose work is often rendered invisible. I also argue that Vives and Shakespeare’s praise of Katherine’s exemplary kinship, conduct and labor function as compensatory mechanisms that serve to reify Katherine’s whiteness even as her marriage to Henry VIII is failing. While Starz’s *The Spanish Princess* recasts Katherine of Aragon’s story through the contemporary lens of #MeToo and #BlackLivesMatter, it nevertheless borrows from Shakespeare and Vives’ construction of queenly whiteness at the expense of racial others.



Shakespearean queens in contemporary media are often reimagined through the lens of contemporary gender politics. An example is the Starz 2019–20 historical miniseries *The Spanish Princess*, which offers a feminist reimagining of Katherine of Aragon and Henry VIII’s marriage via flame-haired Charlotte Hope and boy-band handsome Ruairi O’Connor. Based upon Philippa Gregory’s best-selling novels *The Constant Princess*

and *The King's Curse*, *The Spanish Princess* emphasizes feminism by affirming the maternal bonds between queenly mothers and daughters. The first episode of the series emphasizes Katherine's relations with her mother, Queen Isabel of Castile (played by the legendary Alicia Borrachero). Katherine is shown accompanied by Isabel on her procession through peninsular Spain to embark for England to be wed to Arthur. In one scene, the wedding procession is menaced by an uprising of Moriscos dressed in picturesque Middle Eastern garb, threateningly raising their swords at the Queen of Castile and the future Queen of England. Queen Isabel, clad in bright golden colored armor and with hair braided in the fashion of a Gothic queen, leads the charge against the Moriscos at the head of her army. Before the charge, Katherine offers to join her mother in battle, reminding her that she has accompanied her on many a campaign of the Reconquista. Isabel, however, stops her, reminding her daughter that her duty is to wed the English prince and alongside her sister Juana, who has married into the Habsburgs of Burgundy, to form a protective enclosure around Spain: "Sois de mi sangre. Una auténtica infanta de Castilla y un día, Reina de Inglaterra," Isabel tells her [You are of my blood. An authentic princess of Castile and one day, Queen of England] (*The Spanish Princess* 2019). In Isabel's words to her daughter, Katherine's nobility and regal destiny are intertwined with one of the most totemic materials of early modern European identity—blood. Isabel then seats herself on her white horse, places a golden crown embellished with rubies over her helmet. With the bright sun glinting on her golden armor, she leads the vanguard while holding aloft her sword. Meanwhile, Katherine kneels as if in prayer to aid her mother, but the mantra she repeats over and over (in English) names the contradiction of her position: "Daughter of Spain. Queen of England. Wife to Prince Arthur." Katherine nevertheless obeys her filial obligations to biopower: expanding state power through dynastic marriage and procreation. As Isabel slashes through the Moriscos, her golden armor and Katherine's brilliant red hair offer a counterpoint to the mass of converted Moors whose visibly raced bodies present a threat to mother and daughter's beauty, whiteness, and power. As did the chronicles and histories sponsored by the historical Isabel the Catholic, the Starz adaptation reifies the Spanish queen's whiteness through her two bodies: the sovereign, martial body called into protection of the biological kinship fostered by her procreative, maternal one.

Later, Katherine's kinship with Isabel will shape her iconography as a martial queen of England. One of the most iconic moments of the series occurs in season 2, when an armor-clad Katherine herself joins the Battle of Flodden, leading the vanguard of the English army repelling the invasion from Scotland while Henry is away for wars in France. The historical Katherine indeed commanded the English military forces and gave a speech while pregnant with Mary to boost the morale of her soldiers, but she did not enter combat (Goodwin 2013, 146). The image of Katherine clad in silver armor and sporting long braided hair as she charges at the Scots offers a variation on the visual theme established by Isabel of Castile in episode 1. In the Flodden scene, the racial others setting in relief Katherine's beauty, fertility, and sovereign power are the Scots, who are dressed as uncouth barbarians pitted against a chivalric English army defending its borders. Nevertheless, Katherine embodies, as does Borrachero's Isabel of Castile, the iconography of queenly power and purity *through* maternal kinship. Many of the promotional posters for season 2 concentrate upon the Flodden moment: they feature Catherine Hope in profile, glancing ahead while holding up a sword pointed downwards. Her hair is loose,

and she is clad in golden armor that is molded over her breasts and pregnant belly. The gold hued armor offers a visual recall to the color scheme of Isabel's armor in season 1's first episode, but the loosened red hair, the determined gaze, and iconic singularity are reminiscent of posters of Cate Blanchet's Armada scenes from *Elizabeth I: The Golden Age*. The Starz staging of Katherine's exceptional white beauty encodes both blood purity and expansionary state power, given that the queen's symbolic embodiment of the nation is entangled with kinship's technologies of reproduction and discipline. This Katherine of Aragon should be read in context to racial imaginaries enabled by adaptations; these adaptations include not only contemporary media's indebtedness to Shakespeare and Fletcher's portrayals of Katherine in *All is True*, but also the playwrights' engagements with the discourses of racialized queenship that circulated in early modern print culture.

Media coverage of *The Spanish Princess* has portrayed the series as a contemporary feminist remake of the story of a valiant yet tragic queen. Yet, many of these themes can be found in historical imaginings of queenship such as Shakespeare and Fletcher's 1613 play *Henry VIII* or *All is True*. Scholarship cites Holinshed's *Chronicles* as the primary influence upon *All is True*'s portrait of Katherine. As I show in this essay, however, Shakespeare and Fletcher's representation of Katherine is also influenced by Juan Luis Vives's conduct book, *Instruction of a Christian Woman*, which is dedicated to the Catholic Tudor queen. The stakes of broadening the scope of Shakespeare and Fletcher's source material impacts our analysis of media cultures of Shakespearean adaptation, which continue to turn to and refashion the racial imaginaries of Tudor queenship. Vives's text became the most popular conduct book for women in the Tudor period and beyond (Fantazzi 2008, 94), influencing ideas of queenship through its portrait of Katherine of Aragon and her maternal family. The network of historical borrowings and adaptations between the queenly iconographies reveal how queenship in *All is True* is defined by tropes of racial kinship that were being pressurized during the Reformation and Counter Reformation. These tropes of racialized queenship fuel our reimaginings of glamorous royal women in productions like *The Spanish Princess*, speaking to how we remain fascinated by gendered embodiments of whiteness even as we struggle to make space for stories of racial inclusion and diversity. Moreover, I argue that in Shakespeare and Fletcher's play, as well as the twenty-first-century adaptations, whiteness reveals itself as a compensatory racial imagination that can at times be strengthened by the representational failure of one or more components of the queen's symbolic racial enclosure.

### RACIALIZED QUEENS

The moral and political ambivalence of Shakespeare and Fletcher's *All is True* is channeled through its various queens' affective charisma (Bliss, 1975, 6). It legitimates Anne Boleyn as Queen of England and mother of Elizabeth I, while also memorializing Elizabeth's legacy. Cranmer's prophecy over the cradle of the infant Princess Elizabeth remains one of the most value-bearing moments of the work. But Elizabeth is not the only gravitational force in the play. *All is True*'s Katherine of Aragon also emerges as a charismatic figure in her own

right. “Untouched by the ambiguity surrounding virtually every character, Katherine adheres to a system of absolute values and finds herself isolated from a world giving only lip service to those values (Bliss, 1975, 10).

Queenly exemplarity is a fertile site of race-thinking in early modern imaginations, as well as contemporary ones. Media adaptations have harnessed and refashioned racial imaginaries from Shakespeare’s representations of queenship to refract contemporary racial concerns. The currency of Shakespearean adaptations in world markets and archives is determined by the global cultural marketplace that views Shakespeare as “a self-validating, self-regenerating commodity” (Joubin 2017, 1, 6). *The Spanish Princess’s* rereadings of race engage with complex racial imaginaries present within *All is True*. In Shakespeare and Fletcher’s play, Katherine’s whiteness emerges as a racialized category whose representational strategies adapt to the Tudor Queen’s fortunes. Scholars have not sufficiently discussed how the source material has fueled Shakespeare’s, Fletcher’s, and our own racial investments in Katherine. Moreover, there is insufficient discussion of how the play is in conversation with Katherine’s own self-fashioning of her queenly iconography through texts such as Vives’s *De Institutione Feminae Christianae*. The book was commissioned by Katherine and was written by Vives in 1523 and published in 1524. It enjoyed widespread domestic and international circulation: it was printed and reprinted over nine times in English alone over the course of the sixteenth century (Travitsky 1997, 164–5). Examining the intertextual relationships between *All is True* and the conduct books that influenced it, Shakespeare and Fletcher’s play implicates queenship in the imagination of a “white superiority [that] is not a given but must be cultivated, maintained and vigilantly guarded” (Erickson 2000, 322). Scholars note that early modern women played an active role in defining and performing whiteness through cosmetics and other practices (Poitevin 2011, 62). Likewise, discourses of early modern queenship can often demonstrate women’s agency in fashioning whiteness as a category of elite identity defined by intersectionalities of race, gender, and class.

Racial kinship is integral to the fashioning of Katherine’s queenship in *All is True*, as well as in the Vives source material. Henry’s repudiation of Katherine in *All is True* is accompanied by several statements proclaimed by herself, Henry and other courtly figures attesting to the exemplarity of her queenship and of her noble lineage descending from King Ferdinand and Queen Isabel. In these statements, Katherine’s genealogy becomes closely associated with her moral exemplarity. In the trial, Katherine declares: “I am about to weep; but thinking that/ We are a queen, or long have dreamed so, certain/ The daughter of a king” (2.4.68–70)<sup>1</sup>. Earlier in the scene, Katherine deliberately references her and Henry’s respective fathers as agreed upon the legitimacy of her match with Henry as she attempts to deconstruct the case against her remarriage. In her address, she defends her case’s validity by repeatedly referencing her nobility and royal lineage.

. . . Ferdinand,  
My father, King of Spain, was reckoned one  
The wisest prince that there had reigned by many  
A year before (2.4.45–48)

1 All in-play citations come from *King Henry VIII (All Is True)*, edited by Gordon McMullan (The Arden Shakespeare, Third Series, 2000).

The references to her kinship not only evoke pathos for her condition, but they also constitute the rhetorical centerpiece of her queenly self-fashioning. Historically, Katherine interwove heraldic and symbolic references to Ferdinand and Isabel in her portraiture and accoutrements, validating her queenship by invoking their legendary status as the *Reyes Católicos* or the Catholic monarchs. She initially took as her emblem the pomegranate, a reference to Granada, the final Moorish state of Iberia conquered by Ferdinand and Isabel in 1492 in their quest to unify Spain (Lapotaire 1998, 135). In a later Holbein-like painting of Katherine in her mature years, she is seen holding the seven arrows in a yoke that formed the crest of Isabel and Ferdinand (Lapotaire 1998, 135). Katherine's self-fashioning as an English queen self-consciously referenced her lineage from Ferdinand and Isabel, invoking the cult of their sovereignty that portrayed them as the icons of a divinely mandated purification of a reunified Christian Spain from the domestic contamination of Moors and Jews. In *All is True* (2.4), Katherine's reference to her elite kinship foregrounds lineage as central to the self-fashioning of her queenship and wifeness, particularly in the moment where the two are imperiled. In calling attention to her exemplary conduct as Henry's wife and her impeccable royal lineage from Ferdinand and Isabella, Katherine stresses the link between the two. She frames her inalterable status as queen through her embodied conjunction of wifely deportment and elite kinship, staging an immensely rhetorical counter to Henry and Wolsey's arguments.

Conduct in early modern texts often functions as a racialized marker indexing somatic difference (Akhimie 2018, 5). Cultivated comportment functions as a sign of the mutability of race for social performers seeking to improve their social condition (Akhimie 2018, 12). It can bear witness to one's biological lineage in cases where social change threatens one's privileges within hierarchical systems of difference. From a speech theory perspective, Katherine's arguments in *All is True's* trial scenes are efficacious. After Katherine defiantly leaves the court, Henry's praise of her repeats the formulation conjoining her comportment and noble lineage.

. . . Thou art alone —  
 If thy rare qualities, sweet gentleness,  
 Thy meekness saint-like, wife-like government,  
 Obeying in commanding, and thy parts  
 Sovereign and pious else, could speak thee out—  
 The queen of earthly queens. She's *noble born*,  
 And like *her true nobility* she has  
 Carried herself towards me. (2.4.134–43) [italics mine]

Henry describes the correspondence between Katherine's noble birth and her noble conduct, reproducing the rhetoric characterizing Katherine's queenly iconography. The singularity of Katherine's exemplarity—"thou art *alone*" (italics mine)—incarnates the racial exceptionalism embodied by her conduct and lineage. Were it not for the ban against wedding one's brother's wife, Henry declares to rhetorical effect, he would never reject someone who has proven herself to be the perfect queen, consort, and woman. Katherine's conduct also

becomes the signifier of this rhetorical blending of her blood, lineage, and kinship. Jean Feerick has argued that early modern race defined the body through the qualities of blood, which was often associated with one's familial lineage and social class. These early modern connotations of blood often imagined elite group identity as constituted through "a metaphysical separation from one's social inferiors" (2010, 9). If Renaissance homologies associated base men with base mettle/metal, enforcing a cultural logic that conceived of lowborn persons as made of unworthy and insubstantial materials (Kern Paster 2005, 226), the elite lineage of queens could represent the most "pure" and noble strains of blood. At the moment in which her queenship is in danger of being stripped from her, Katherine reinforces her status through the qualities—conduct and lineage—that are intertwined with her gendered embodiment of whiteness. Like Holinshed, Shakespeare and Fletcher have these attributes endorsed by the very man who is threatening her belonging in the club of elite white womanhood by divorcing her.

In the trial scene of *All is True*, the interlinking of conduct and kinship in representations of Katherine's queenship also indicates the tenuous nature of early modern whiteness in its anxiety to signal social value in an unstable political and symbolic network. In some cases, images of differently hued bodies are arranged alongside "white" bodies to stabilize its signifying function. As Erickson has noted, representations of black bodies "were played out against a spectacle of whiteness, most prominently figured in the cosmetically enhanced and poetically celebrated version presented by Queen Elizabeth I" (1993, 499–528). In other cases—as in Henry's speech in *All is True*—conduct and kinship are invoked as mutually reinforcing signifiers to perform significant representational labor on behalf of whiteness. As white-adjacent signifiers of social value, conduct and kinship can perform as racial indexes in contexts where the traditional signifiers of elite women's whiteness—namely, marital enclosure and disciplining of women's sexuality within the household—are stripped from the elite woman, as in Katherine's case after her divorce. Ironically, Henry must defend Katherine's unimpeachable value if he is to defend the uncategorical imperative of his cause, namely, divorce on grounds of Katherine being his brother's widow. In Henry's analogy, Katherine is not only noble born but her comportment is *like* "her true nobility," a simile that identifies her blood with moral virtues seen as biologically transmitted and socially disciplined through kinship. Conduct functions as the marker of this noble blood, attesting to her pure lineage at the moment when she is being disassociated from the privileges attached to her status as marital property of the King of England. The linkages of conduct and kinship play a compensatory role in reinforcing the queen's whiteness, despite the impending stigma of divorce and the loss of the racial enclosure of her marital household.

Whiteness is a form of property that comes to be imagined, instantiated, and materialized in the bodies of early modern women. Katherine's representation in *All is True* shows that whiteness in early modern culture often becomes visible when the enclosures of women's bodies in marriage or other patriarchal relations of power are disrupted. Arthur Little has defined early modern whiteness as "the exclusive rights of possession, use, and disposition" such that "the modernity of the early modern period [lies in] its [often uneven] investments . . . in exploring and sometimes claiming whiteness as a racial property" (2016, 89). Additionally, early modern

representations are sites where racial anxieties and desires frequently surface (Hall 1995, 62–122; Boose 1994, 45–46; Hendricks 1996, 57–58). As a somatic anchor of her biological race, Katherine’s kinship with other queens reinforces the symbolic purity and irreproachability of her blood. In emphasizing the maternal bonds with other queenly women, kinship becomes a racial imaginary that reifies whiteness just as the royal woman is in danger of losing her privileged status as the sovereign’s domestic property. As a sign of pure blood whose totemic value is reproduced through maternal relationality, queens’ kinship becomes figured as an endogamous regime of blood that is somatically and socially reproduced by and through elite women. Even when he is arguing for the legitimacy of his divorce from her, Henry cannot help but reproduce the iconography of queenly kinship that defined Katherine’s image as Queen of England.

In *All is True* and other texts, Katherine’s image is defined in context to the cultural representations of other queens such as Anne Boleyn and Elizabeth in ways that speak to the role of whiteness in compensating for the political, theological, and racial conflicts of the Reformation and Counter Reformation. Sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century texts on queenship conscript royal women’s bodies in their efforts to navigate the fluid, often perilous formations of the domestic and foreign emerging through Reformation and Counter Reformation conflicts. “The special role of women in the transmission of power through their reproductive capacities” endowed royal women with representational power (Hunt 1991, 2). Yet, even as the play celebrates Katherine’s whiteness through her conduct and elite kinship, it bears witness to her reproductive failure to the state’s political future, given Archbishop Cranmer’s prophecy over the cradle of the infant Elizabeth. In fact, it is the loss of her political power and her class prestige from her voided marital status that ironically intensifies her whiteness through the compensatory tropes of conduct and biological kinship. In *All is True*, queens’ bodily political and theological reproductivity — or the lack thereof — became sites for race-making. As Dennis Austin Britton has shown, Protestant constructions of a spiritual “elect” racialized political community by rendering groups of Christians (such as Catholics) as other and foreclosing exogamous forms of incorporation in the body politic, such as baptism or conversion through intermarriage (2014, 8–13). The racializing of religious identities such as Catholicism paradoxically led to the universalizing of whiteness as a racial imaginary that could compensate for confessionally othered bodies and rehabilitate them to the imagined community of the nation. While the religious affiliations of Elizabethan and Jacobean playwrights continue to be debated, Shakespeare’s familial and patronage-based affiliations with Catholic factions and Fletcher’s with Protestant ones foreground the cross-sectarian power of whiteness to reclaim Katherine as an English queen. The collaborative nature of *All is True* foregrounds the labor of racial imaginaries of whiteness to calibrate cultural investments in queenship and thus to re-envision the grounds of emergent national identity.

The emergence of queenship as a racialized imaginary may buttress structures of patriarchal power, but its efficacy is partly rooted in the women’s agency in fashioning whiteness as a form of political and cultural power. In *All is True*, Shakespeare and Fletcher’s representation of Katherine’s racial kinship borrows from her own self-fashioning of her image through Anglo-Spanish print culture, most notably in Vives’s *Instruction of a Christian Woman*. Katherine sponsored *Instruction of a Christian Woman* as a conduct book for her daugh-

ter Mary (Fantazzi 2008, 7). Scholars have long discussed the book's centrality to early modern conceptions of gender, but not enough has been printed with respect to Vives's investments in queenship as constructed through racialized formations of kinship. In *Instruction of a Christian Woman*, Luis Vives links together the purity and stainlessness of Katherine's "mynde & goodness" (Vives 1529) with her maternal kinship bonds. Vives emphasizes Katherine's maternal relations, closely associating his allegorical representation of the perfect Christian woman—namely, Katherine herself—with her elite kinship network with other queens in her family. In one of his most well-known passages, Vives uneasily praises education for elite women, but only to fashion them into perfect domestic partners. For his example, he turns to Isabel the Catholic and her daughters.

Our age has seen the four daughters of Isabel . . . each of them well accomplished . . . There were no women in human memory more chaste than these four sisters, none with a more unblemished name, and there have been no queens who were so loved and admired by their subjects. None loved their husbands more, none displayed more compliant obedience, none preserved themselves and their loved ones more blamelessly and more assiduously, none were so opposed to base behavior and lax morals, none fulfilled to such perfection the ideals expected of the virtuous woman (Vives 69–70).

Here, Vives also praises Isabel's education of her four daughters in Latin to make them well learned. As scholars have observed, Vives's paradoxical attitude toward women's education led him to praise learning for women, but only insofar as it could reinforce women's chastity and proper domestic enclosure as the property of their fathers and husbands (Loomba 1989, 71). Scholars have not sufficiently explored the extent to which Vives's notion of domesticity operates as a form of "racial enclosure"<sup>2</sup> intended to manage the paradoxical confluence of the queen's biological reproductivity and the social circulation of her image. The queen's chastity not only signifies bodily and spiritual purity, but it is also a means of racially disciplining family and dynastic bloodlines. In this passage, Katherine and her sisters' exemplarity in learning is only endowed with value insofar as it nurtures bodily chastity that is unmarked by any "spotte of vilanye," namely impure blood and tainted conduct. Early modern moralizing was a fertile site for racialist doctrines; in the traffic between gender and race, the equation between figurative darkening and the transgression of female sexuality is a well-established one (Bovilsky 39). Vives also privileges Katherine's kinship with her mother and sisters as disciplined by a regime of education that nurtures the self-enclosure of women's bodies to preserve their racially marked purity.

"There were no women more" or "none more" rhetorically prefixes each of Vives's adjectives for the exemplarity of Katherine and her sisters. Stylistically, Vives's rhetorical invocation of Katherine's exceptional embodiment of noble lineage and conduct is a possible model for Henry VIII's "Thou art alone" in the trial scene of *All is True's* (2.4), a verbal flourish which does not appear in the Holinshed intertext. For Vives, learning reinforces the queen's bodily chastity, emerging through the cultivation of arts that protect the household circle. In *Education of a Christian Woman*, women's education is intended to reinforce chasteness of body and mind

2 I borrow the term "racial enclosure" from Saidiya Hartman, who used it in her talk for the June 4–6, 2021, Princeton University conference, *Global Publishing and the Making of Literary Worlds: Translation, Media & Mobility*.



that reifies the power—the reproductive and symbolic futurity—of the male dynasty into which the queen is wedded. Even as Katherine was losing her power and marital legitimacy as royal consort at the Tudor Court, Vives paradoxically turned to other signs of the queen’s race—namely, the conduct and cultivation denoting the blood of a noble family—to shift the queen’s symbolic power from reproducing a pure lineage towards her dissemination of a universal example to audiences through print technology. A queen’s whiteness thus occupies the fluid space between disciplined racial enclosures of private domesticity and the public circulation of her image through technologies of reproduction that are harnessed to discipline publics and normalize them to hierarchies of social order.

Vives wrote his manual at a time when Katherine was losing her power in the Tudor court for her failure to birth a male heir, which influences his strategic turn towards whiteness as a compensatory matrix of signification. Vives associates queens through maternal kinship relations that duplicate the image of the racially elite woman through deep time. In *Instruction of a Christian Woman*, Vives’s allusion to his book’s purpose as a guidebook for Mary’s instruction into a virtuous queen becomes a way to signal to the genealogical futurity of the maternal network of queens that he is celebrating. “Your daughter Mary will read these recommendations and will reproduce them as she models herself on the example of your goodness and wisdom to be found within her own home (Vives 50). For Vives, properly disciplined conduct of a noble born woman becomes the sign of her blood. Education for Vives thus becomes a method of fulfilling the *potentia* inherent in a noble woman, and thus of cultivating her embodiment of her privileged kinship by training her to become *like* the noblewomen of her familial networks. The kinship logic of racialized queenship is embodied by his ambition to instruct Mary to become the copy of Katherine, and thus to become like the queens that Katherine herself resembles, namely her mother and sisters.

In examining his imaginative turn towards racial queenship to buttress Katherine’s status, Shakespeare and Fletcher’s debt to him for their portrait of Katherine in *All is True* becomes clear. Vives promoted queens’ racial purity as disciplined by curated domestic labor for elite women. For instance, Vives references Queen Isabel of Castile and her daughters when he discusses the requisite skills of a well-born woman.

[I]t is dishonorable in the eyes of noble women to remain idle. Queen Isabella, wife of Ferdinand, wished her four daughters to be expert in spinning, sewing, and needlepoint. Of these, two were queens of Portugal, the third we see is queen of Spain and mother of the Emperor Charles, the fourth is the saintly wife of Henry VIII of England (Vives 61)

Vives lauds the queen’s practice of selective domestic work as a sign of her “temperance and honesty” that encloses the elite household from class and racial pollution. He praises sewing as a form of bodily discipline and artful conduct that enforces the endogamous purity of the family unit. “Early modern women of even high rank attended to domestic chores,” and certain forms of women’s work were ubiquitous (Wall 2002, 21). The symbolic economy constructed by queens’ sewing also correlates their gendered, upper class labor with racial purity: the exemplarity of sewing in Vives’ formula partly lies in its tightening of the intimate household circle

to the royal women's marital and blood relations. Queens' domestic chores are meant to limit or at least control the contaminating influence of servants and enslaved people in the royal household; non-royal, lower class and enslaved domestic labor might possibly become too familial by usurping intimate household chores like darning the king's shirts. In other words, Vives associates queenship with the household as a racial enclosure that is symbolically sustained by the queen's domestic work. Vives' lavish praise of queens' domestic work also has the effect of erasing the endless, menial labor of non-royal and enslaved workers that was required to sustain the royal household. Here, the elite household that symbolizes Katherine's whiteness is her maternal one, not her marital one, indicating the compensatory turn towards biological kinship to ameliorate her loss of status in the Tudor court. In Vives's fashioning of the cult of queenship through kinship, Isabel the Catholic's practice of teaching her daughters sewing reinforces kinship as an endogamous regime of pure blood that is guarded, ministered, and reproduced by the queen through her conduct and bodily discipline. This passage might possibly have been an influence upon the opening scene of act 3 in *All is True* that showcases the repudiated Katherine's skill in needlework. The stage directions describe Katherine and her women as "at work" — namely sewing — as Cardinals Wolsey and Campeius enter upon her to persuade her to agree to Henry's terms before the case comes to trial. In *All is True*, the intertwining of Katherine's conduct and lineage in the needlework and courtroom scenes speak to the way adaptation compensates Katherine's loss of status from losing political, marital, and reproductive power, using other indexes of exemplarity to construct whiteness as universalizing racial imaginary that transforms the queen into a national English icon.

Over the course of *All is True*, the symbolic network defining Katherine's whiteness undergoes a shift. From model matron Katherine transforms into female saint, where the painful shift towards the latter is mediated by the premature end of the marital household as a racial enclosure. Scholars have discussed the palpable anxiety haunting *All is True*'s concern with reproduction and dynastic continuation. Like Vives, the play confronts the divorce as traumatic threat to Katherine's elite identity by valorizing her whiteness as a compensatory mechanism. Additionally, the play reimagines the racial kinship underlying the queen's whiteness from biological relationships to more abstract notions of community such as sainthood. In *All is True*, the entanglement of racial queenship with nonbiological dimensions of kinship becomes evident in the scene of the Catholic Tudor queen's death at Kimbolton castle (4.2). This masque is redolent with colorist symbolism of light. Polarities of "light" and "dark" in early modern cultural production are tied to the racial imaginaries taking shape through the emergent slave trade and mercantile expansionism (Hall, 1995, 9). As Kim Hall observes, light imagery implicit in such terms as fairness or beauty or goodness most often refer to the appearance or moral states of women (1995, 9). In Katherine's dream vision, the white robed angels masked with golden vizards heralding Katherine's death suggest the unmistakable connotations of light and purity that channel but also secularize and nationalize her representations in Counter Reformation polemic as a Catholic martyr. Katherine's narration of the vision to her attendants upon awakening emphasizes the theme of light.

No? Saw you not even now a blessed troop  
 Invite me to a banquet, whose bright faces

Cast thousand beams upon me, like the sun?  
 They promised me eternal happiness  
 And brought me garlands . . . (4.2.87–91)

Katherine's self-image in the vision as crowned with verdant garlands and soaked with light from the "blessed troop" engenders a split in her earthly body. Her servant Patience notes the bodily transformation in Katherine following the vision.

Do you note  
 How much her grace is altered on the sudden?  
 How long her face is drawn? How pale she looks,  
 And of an earthly cold? (4.2.95–98)

Katherine's apotheosis into martyr transforms her into a sovereign figure in her own right whose exaltation is imagined through whiteness suffusing her two bodies, the earthly and the heavenly. Shakespeare and Fletcher's imagination of her death invokes Kantorowicz's concept of the king's two bodies, where Katherine's ungendering through divorce and death has literally split her biological body (marked by its genealogical failures) from her sovereign body of spiritual and moral exemplarity. In this scene, Katherine's transformation into heavenly queen turns to images of light and whiteness: her form in the dream image is soaked with the light from a "thousand beams" while her pale earthly body is stripped of the red or ruddy tint associated with feminine beauty and reproductive sexuality. As Farah Karim-Cooper has noted, beauty for Renaissance writers relied on symmetry and the very careful balance of colors (2006, 8). Red shaded with white came to be a valued marker of female beauty. However, red tint was also suspicious. In Renaissance poetry, metaphors of roses, lilies, ivory, gold, silver and vermilion doubled as references to properties used to make cosmetics (Karim-Cooper 2006, 12). On one hand, red tint can denote white beauty and sexuality that are ripe for recruitment as patriarchal property. On the other, red color can also signify venal duplicity of cosmetics covering up impure and imperfect flesh (12). Katherine's whitening through sickness and grief thus envisions her growing corporeal transparency revealing her spiritual and biological purity. Whiteness here operates through a compensatory logic of kinship—here, with saints and martyrs—that exalts Katherine even after her failure to continue the reproduction of the dynasty into which she married.

Whiteness in Shakespeare's play reveals itself to be an enormously adaptive imaginary that takes shape by configuring itself to shifts in representational systems. The imagery of queens reveals that early modern whiteness anxiously polices the biological and symbolic generativity of queen's bodies. However, a queen's symbolic power can ironically intensify when the racial imaginary of her whiteness labors to compensate for failures in biological reproduction by rerouting kinship along alternate frameworks. For instance, in Shakespeare and Fletcher's fashioning of Katherine at Kimbolton, whiteness operates to compensate for her biopolitical unqueening by enrolling her into the symbolic kinship of saints, commonly depicted in polemic as gaining crowns as compensation for the suffering they had endured. In *All is True*, Katherine's apotheosis as saint is

imagined in peculiarly sovereign terms through the whitening of her two divided bodies: the heavenly one prefigured in the dream vision and the earthly one that appears increasingly pale through sickness, deprivation, and grief. In other words, *All is True's* dream vision shows the adaptive and compensatory logic of whiteness by intensifying Katherine's queenly prestige and gravitas by shifting her kinship away from the biopolitical one of family towards the ranks of national martyrology.

### CODA: ADAPTIVE WHITENESS

Shakespearean adaptations speak to both the creative possibilities of appropriating Shakespeare to imagine global, transcultural, glocal, and local sites of racial reparation as well as the continuing persistence of “white racial frames” (Iyengar and Jacobson 2020, 1–9; Corredera 2020, 359). Emma Frost and Matthew Graham, the creators of *The Spanish Princess*, have adopted the approach of blending historical detail from the Tudor archives with artistic revisionism to contextualize Katherine's story within #metoo conversations. I have also argued that *The Spanish Princess's* portrayal of Katherine of Aragon adapts and refracts notions of racialized queenship present within *All is True* and its source material. While presenting a feminist, multicultural, and multiracial interpretation of Katherine's story, *The Spanish Princess* reifies the entanglements of queenship and whiteness from Vives' conduct book. Moreover, like Shakespeare and Fletcher's play, *The Spanish Princess* demonstrates the adaptive, fluid nature of whiteness that responds to threats and dangers to its signification of power by adapting its symbolic network to intensify its iconic intensity. As with the courtroom scenes of *All is True*, the last episodes of season 2 of *The Spanish Princess* grapple with racially reimagining and reinventing Katherine after the breakdown of her marriage with Henry. However, in the series, she becomes a feminist icon for #metoo who leaves an abusive Henry and redefines her kinship through her daughter. In the last scene, Hope literally walks away from the palace holding the hand of a young Mary. Dressed in the black wimpled outfit of Katherine's National Portrait Gallery painting, she pauses in the gardens to symbolically release a caged bird. Unlike the Katherine of the portrait, the black outfit attractively sets off Hope's beauty, slenderness, and luminous white skin. In November 2020, Frost commented: “I don't think a 21st-century female audience wants to see a story where their heroine is vanquished by the end. What we felt was while the Tudors around her descend into madness, Catherine rises above it. She finds peace. She finds her own inner center through God, through her devotion to her daughter, and through love” (Lenker 2020). By turning to twentieth- and twenty-first-century feminist frameworks to reimagine Katherine of Aragon's story, Frost and Graham repurpose the tropes of queenly kinship—in this case, the biological one of her connection with Mary and the gendered one of solidarity with “female audiences”—to re-envision Katherine's new identity after the end of her heteronormative bond with Henry. The Starz series refashions the queenly conduct from filial obedience and domestic labor in the household's racial enclosure into a propulsive move outdoors towards the emotional and social possibilities of feminist independence. However, by choosing not to alter Hope to match the age and health conditions of the historical Katherine (and by not considering colorblind casting strategies for the queen), Frost and Graham end up reifying political whiteness by employing the symbolic tropes of white beau-

ty, woundability, and interpersonal performances of fragility and strength that can work to sideline women of color from #metoo narratives (Phipps, 2019, 1).

Multiracial casting in *The Spanish Princess* also reinforces the production's racial blind spots. Since season 1 of *The Spanish Princess*, Katherine's whiteness has framed by her black attendants, Lina and Oviedo, played by Stephanie Levi-John and Aaron Cobham. The characters interpret historical figures from Katherine's entourage at the Tudor court: Catalina de Cardenas (or Cardones), a royal slave and bedmaker in Katherine's retinue, who married a Moorish crossbow maker named Oviedo. In interviews, Emma Frost and Matthew Graham tie their foregrounding of black attendants in the Queen of England's retinue to their use of multiracial casting to portray a historically nuanced England. However, by reimagining Lina as Katherine's "best-friend," they re-fashion the historical Katherine's warm relationship with her ladies in waiting along the lines of a rather problematic multicultural race blindness that is supposed to make possible an interpersonal equality of affect. As with their historical counterparts, Lina and Oviedo's presence in England testifies to Katherine's exalted lineage and her affiliations with the wealth and power of the Spanish colonial empire. But in the Starz imagining of Lina as Katherine's best friend, the channel offers a charged portrait of the Queen's exemplary colorblindness that rhetorically presents the queen as inclusive, multicultural, and thus deserving of the privileges of power that she has enjoyed throughout the show. Katherine's inclusiveness towards her Moorish servants contrasts with the racism of English characters, but it also diverts attention from the Habsburg empire's practices of slavery, colonial violence towards indigenous American populations, inquisitorial surveillance of conversos, Moriscos, and others.

On the one hand, it is satisfying to see a happy ending enjoyed onscreen by a black family, given that entertainment culture has traditionally consigned them to tragic or comic relief roles that serve to advance the plot lines of the white main characters. On the other, Lina and Oviedo's representational labor in fashioning Katherine's iconic exemplarity of #metoo whiteness continues to speak of the instrumentality of onscreen minority characters, as well as of Frost's unstated assumption of the racial identity of the female audience whom she imagines will identify with the issues of abuse and sexual violence. If the Moorish servants' marital happiness acts as a foil to Katherine's symbolic power as a (white) #metoo icon, are they that different from the blackamoors in Elizabethan paintings of elite white women? In transforming the former Queen of England into a questionably feminist and multicultural #metoo icon, *The Spanish Princess* illustrates how whiteness continues to survive through deep time through its imaginative powers of adaptation and compensation.

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