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I am all the things I have seen:

The New York Caucasian newspaper, the
scarred back of Gordon the Slave, the Draft Riots, darky tunes, and mer-
chants distorting my face to sell thread, soap, shoe polish, coconut.

—TONI MORRISON, Preface, *The Black Book* (1973)

The term “Caucasian” is dropped by recent writers on Ethnology;
for the people about Mount Caucasus, are, and have ever been, Mongols.
The great “white race” now seek paternity . . . in Arabia . . . Keep on,
gentlemen; you will find yourselves in Africa, by-and-by.

—JAMES MCCUNE SMITH, Introduction to Frederick Douglass,
My Bondage and My Freedom (1855)

Some things are just too unjust for words . . . and too
ambiguous for either speech or ideas.

—RALPH ELLISON, *Invisible Man* (1952)

