# Somatic Similarity
## The White Other and Titus Andronicus

> Given that the concept of racial hierarchy is a strategy employed to make visible what has been intentionally represented as inevitable, whiteness is an important aspect of any conversation about race.
>                   – The Racial Imaginary Institute Curatorial Team[1]

> Realize one might also make strange what seems obvious, nearby, close.
>                   – Beth Loffreda and Claudia Rankine, *The Racial Imaginary*[2]

Even when racial similarity exists in the form of skin color, one can still find in early modern discourse racialized difference that affirms the reality of the racial hierarchy while hinting at its instability.[3] Thus, I begin this chapter on *Titus Andronicus* in an unlikely place:[4] with Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, a tragedy that is set in Scotland and centers white people and their experiences. I want to highlight briefly how *Macbeth* exemplifies several of this book's concerns in relation to gender, genre, domesticity, mental well-being, anti-Blackness, power, violence, and, of course, intra-racial tension. Through the application of my intraracial color-line theory and the white other concept, I discovered *Macbeth* has an interracial couple (beyond what Amy Scott-Douglass refers to),[5] a pairing that always signals racialized conflict in Shakespeare.[6] In this dramatic work, there is "fair and noble hostess" Lady Macbeth (1.6.24),[7] who embodies masculine qualities, and "black Macbeth" (4.3.53), who fails to embody strong white patriarchal masculinity, as his wife complains (1.7.48–62).[8] The dark, less-than-ideal Macbeths are obvious white others, along with the play's several murderers and Macdonwald, a Scottish rebel who is killed by Macbeth and does not appear in the play. What these different figures have in common, beyond revealing themselves as uncivilized, violent white people, a woman and men, are their sinful violations of whiteness: the Macbeths execute the killing of their esteemed domestic guest, King Duncan, and violate hospitality code; Macdonwald, similar to the previously mentioned Robert

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Figure 1.1    Macbeth, Act 3, Scene 4 by Tobias Bauer (nineteenth century printmaker). Image 29151, used by permission of the Folger Shakespeare Library.

Devereux, organizes a rebellion against Scotland; and the murderer characters noted in the dramatis personae are responsible for the deaths of Banquo and of Macduff's family. For their betrayals of whiteness, one can in a sense consider them all "race traitors," a topic I touch on in the Conclusion, as these characters do not adhere to contemporary standards and expectations of white hegemony. Moreover, they engage in white-on-white violence. These are a couple of the reasons they appear darker in Figure 1.1, separated from the whiter-looking background figures and blending in, color-wise, with the slaughtered beast on the banquet table that separates the Macbeths from their peers.

With respect to understanding the intraracial color-line and the white other, *Macbeth*'s Three Witches – the "black and midnight hags" – articulate what I read as a useful theory that underscores the potential for less-than-ideal, uncouth whiteness to exist (4.1.48). At the play's onset, in unison, they declare: "Fair is foul, and foul is fair" (1.1.11). The integration of foulness and fairness, read respectively as synonymous with

blackness and whiteness (synonyms I explore in Chapters 2 and 3), illuminate a gray area where whiteness polices blackness to negotiate its own meaning in the absence of Black people. Like Richard III, who finds himself "so far in blood that sin will pluck on sin" (4.2.64), Macbeth finds himself "in blood / Stepped in so far" by the play's climax, reminding us on which side of the intraracial color-line to situate him at that point (3.4.137–138). While I will not analyze here everything that makes *Macbeth* a suitable text to (re)read through the critical lens that defines *Shakespeare's White Others*, I must emphasize a key observation: Macbeth's conflicts make him a fascinating case study because he crosses the intraracial color-line and is, like the Romans and Goths in *Titus*, a convertible white figure. In his case, he begins the play on the right side of the intraracial color-line, so to speak, policing villainous whiteness as a respected member of the dominant culture. Eventually, he becomes one who has "black and deep desires," thus representing the kind of whiteness that needs eradicating, a blackened whiteness that Macduff eventually does destroy (1.4.51). Unlike Malcolm, whose retained white goodness enables him to erase the "black scruples" from his "soul" (4.3.116–117),[9] Macbeth can do no such thing after killing his King and Macduff's family because he permanently mars his once presumably good white soul – "what's done cannot be undone" (5.1.68). As *Macbeth* and *Titus* demonstrate, through imagination, and through images, the white other *becomes*. Through their diminished racial whiteness, the white other becomes metaphorically blackened. As a result, they may even become blackballed or blacklisted . . . black somehow, somehow black . . . in ways that perpetuate the casualness of anti-Black racism and that sustain the centuries-old myth of white superiority.

## "Into a Pit of Ink": The Emerging White Other

As *Titus* dramatizes with transparency, racial whiteness is a tiresomely high-maintenance enterprise. It is important to note that the premodern white other was created *only* in, and as far as scholars know, for the white mind.[10] So, we can also think of this figure as a psychological phenomenon, a kind of literal manifestation of a fragmented, split white self that underscores and actualizes what is unhealthy about racism because it generates white identity incongruity. Distinguished from hegemonic whiteness, and also a rejected figure, the white other stabilizes the inferior position of Black people at the bottom of the racial hierarchy. This is relatively unsurprising since we know the early modern English relied on blackness, physical and symbolic, to conceptualize their own sense of

self.[11] The incessant reliance on blackness is what makes the white identity itself an unstable one;[12] and the incessant influence of anti-Blackness makes the Black identity difficult to keep stable as well. Nobody wins. Yet, the white other's presence implies stability is the goal. This is particularly evident given white hegemony's constant striving to protect its racial ideals as it reproduces itself and its racist ideologies to ensure the sustainability of white dominance. Shifting the optic slightly, one can also imagine the white other as an (in)visible bulwark against "white racial grief," what Michael Eric Dyson considers a defense mechanism that protects and insulates white people from losing their pure social, political, and cultural meaning, and most importantly from losing their superiority.[13]

The white other is a figure whose internally diminished whiteness contrasts with ideal hegemonic whiteness, however the dominant culture defines it. And sometimes, the definition fluctuates on a whim, as *Titus* suggests. In other words, the white other is the dominant culture's ready-made foil designed to fortify social expectations for fully acceptable white racial identity and conduct. I borrow, and refashion for the early modern context, the concept of the "white other" from Lauren S. Cardon's study, *The "White Other" in American Intermarriage Stories, 1945–2008*, which examines fictional intermarriage narratives to explore how ethnic/racial groups are differentiated and how American identity is constructed within "contemporary politics or [in association with] social norms."[14] Cardon studies popular film and literary examples, such as Disney's *Pocahontas* (1995),[15] that illustrate dynamics where the white person (settler John Smith in Disney's film), rather than the racial/ethnic Other (the Indigenous peoples, that is, Pocahontas and the Powhatan People),[16] is positioned as Other because they are a minority representation of whiteness in a larger group that is culturally, ethnically, or somatically different.

Contrastingly, my white other concept diverges from Cardon's in that I am interested in analyzing how abstract spiritual, ethical, or moral distinctions among white people – the kind evident in humanist Renaissance scholar and philosopher Desiderius Erasmus' *Weltbild* and Christian eurocentrism[17] – can create the appearance of otherness (in relationship to blackness or sin), even in moments where everyone shares the same racial/ethnic makeup, as I reinforce in this book. The primary function of my white other concept is to establish a way to other whiteness, for instance, beyond the kinds of cultural differences depicted in a film like *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*, where a waspy white guy, Ian Miller, "is othered by Toula's Greek family," a family that would be considered racially white by today's standards.[18]

As outlined in the Preface, the white other is critically useful because this figure enhances contemporary understandings of the Black/white racial binary when we interpret it as a system containing white,[19] white other, and Black,[20] a racial system that offers, to quote scholar Francesca T. Royster, "a more complex construction of whiteness that is forever patrolling and disciplining the variations within it [and] help[ing] us to better understand the costs of white supremacy."[21] The white other exposes the confusion that racism generates[22] as well as the one-sidedness of criticism that makes race and racialization solely about non-whiteness without recognizing that whiteness, too, matters.[23] For instance, in *Barbarous Play: Race on the Renaissance Stage*, Lara Bovilsky comments that "racialization of a character is often accompanied by derogatory rhetoric";[24] however, with respect to white hegemony, and the racialization of white people, Bovilsky's claim does not quite hold. *Titus* is a key Shakespeare play to explore how the white other concept works, because the drama contains three distinct groups and attempts, but fails, to solidify a clear boundary between them: the Romans (white), the Goths (white other), and the Moors (Black). The Du Boisian color-line, separating white and white other from Black in my reading, and the intraracial color-line, separating white from white other and Black, are visible in Shakespeare's first tragedy. Hierarchical distinctions are apparent among the three groups in relation to who is more superior to whom, with Aaron and his Black son positioned as most abject, despite the Black baby having matrilineal "royal" white blood (5.1.49). Additionally, hierarchical distinctions are made within the play between the Romans and Goths, albeit with blurry boundaries.

### *Violence, No Moor*: Titus *without Aaron*

In Act 1 of *Titus*, the present absence of Aaron, a Black Moor, is impossible to miss: He enters with the Goth prisoners but never speaks, as critics have noted.[25] He is, as I assert in my essay "Remixing the Family: Blackness and Domesticity in Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*," a silent observer in the role of racial/cultural assessor.[26] If one puts oneself in Aaron's shoes in Act 1, then one, too, can become a racial/cultural assessor of the play's intraracial conflicts, which are complicated later by Aaron's deliberately distracting interventions. Beyond seeing Aaron as silent observer, there are other ways to view his purpose, especially considering that Shakespeare's plays were written to be performed. Although hard to miss because of his Blackness, Aaron is not the focal point; the Du Boisian

and intraracial color-lines keep him at the bottom of the racial hierarchy – in his prescribed Black place, marginalized and silent.

Without a voice in Act 1, Aaron has no choice, like us, but to listen to and hear, or read, whiteness; and the experience for us all is quite useful for affirming what Shakespeare centers in this play's opening. Whiteness is the *only* thing we hear. Thus, our "listening ears,"[27] guided by the racially white characters' thoughts and subsequent actions, are exclusively tuned into their interpersonal problems before Shakespeare complicates things in Act 2 when he formally introduces Aaron. This Black character adds another dimension to the play's interracial and intraracial dynamics through his relationship with Tamora and through the later introduction of their somatically Black child. But what is *Titus* without Aaron and his baby? What is *Titus* without giving the audience or the characters the opportunity to focus on racial difference or to be overtly racist?[28] Alluding to Toni Morrison, I ask, what happens when we "take [Aaron] out of it?"[29] This is the serious question I seek to answer in this chapter as I engage with what Morrison refers to as white people's "very, very serious problem," racism. It is a problem that "*they* should start thinking about what *they* can do about it."[30]

When used purposefully, *Titus* can function as an integral antiracist tool, as I and other scholars have argued in different ways. It is a generative text for aiding that "thinking" that white people need to do, because it isolates white people's conduct and also exploits what Anthony Gerard Barthelemy calls "the allegorical possibilities of blackness."[31] It is essential to reflect on Aaron's preliminary absence, since doing so permits the concentration on the white other. The play's first lines, spoken by Roman Saturninus, are a call for intraracial and, perhaps, even intrafamilial violence. In a quarrel with his younger brother, Bassianus, over the royal succession, Saturninus urges his followers to "defend the justice of my cause with arms; / And, countrymen, my loving followers, / Plead my successive titles with your swords" (1.1.24).[32] This defense of primogeniture emphasizes the play's preliminary divisions that evolve into bigger conflicts between intraracial "factions" in this opening Act (1.1.18). Saturninus' address to his "countrymen" is intraracially suggestive in light of Aaron's later use of the term "countryman" (4.2.154), said in reference to Black Muly. The white Romans who follow Saturninus believe in a cause that contrasts with the support Bassianus' followers show him (1.1.9). The opposing value systems here symbolically reflect the dynamic between white hegemony, which champions cultural standards and tradition, and the white other figure, which contradicts dominant social norms.

On a micro level, on one side of the intraracial color-line, Shakespeare showcases brothers fighting brothers, Romans fighting Romans, a dynamic that is echoed in later quarrels in this scene when Titus' son Mutius gets in his way and when Titus at first refuses to let Mutius, whom he has killed, be buried in the family tomb. This intrafamilial moment is worth pausing on. It offers insight into the relationship between power and whiteness and between white power and the exclusionary practices that can create intraracial tension. Right before stabbing Mutius within the play's first three hundred lines, Titus refers to him as "*villain* boy" (1.1.291).[33] This phrasing signals the father's clear disapproval and the son's now dark enemy status, a status that is applied to Black Aaron throughout the play by the white characters. When confronted by his son Lucius and brother Marcus for being "unjust," Titus doubles down on his quick extermination of Mutius (1.1.293). Largely due to his tragic flaw, his unwavering loyalty to the state, he then tries to distance himself from the family members whom he now considers to be "traitors" (1.1.297, 350) and "foes" (1.1.367) who "dishonor[ed]" him (1.1.296). In this troubled white moment, the intraracial color-line emerges and so, too, does Titus' *potential* to become the white other. When Marcus chastises Titus and exclaims, "Thou art a Roman, be not barbarous," he attempts to reign in the Andronici's incensed patriarch. Marcus asserts a core difference between what it means to be a good white Roman and a barbarous white other. In fact, it is a difference he establishes in his opening speech, when he informs the audience of "the weary wars against the barbarous Goths" who were ruled by Tamora, the ethnically different white woman who quickly becomes Saturninus' new wife and Rome's new empress (1.1.28).[34]

By becoming "incorporate in Rome," Tamora and her living Goth sons cross the intraracial color-line (1.1.463). Tamora's ascension, to which Aaron calls attention in his opening speech (2.1.1), enables her swift transition in status, a transition that Rome's most powerful male political figure sanctions. Tamora's gender and whiteness afford her the privilege of influencing how things shift with respect to intraracial tension. Bassianus, her now brother-in-law, and Titus' family quickly become viewed as a "faction": the "father and his traitorous sons," as Tamora calls them (1.1.452–453). And Saturninus sees himself as "dishonored openly" by them all (1.1.432). What he perceives as public humiliation and disrespect interestingly amplifies Titus' earlier rhetoric, articulated after the Mutius conflict. In the eyes of Saturninus and Tamora, the two white political figures with the most power, Titus loses respect as well as his previously revered status. At a dizzyingly rapid rate, the opening scene reflects just

how confusing intraracial tension is in *Titus*. The opening scene also illustrates how racialized designations, and diminished statuses along the color-lines, are violent power moves the dominant culture uses to sustain its authority.

Upon close reading, then, Act 1, Scene 1 leaves us with very little to say that is good about white people's behavior, that of the dominant culture and the barbarous Goths, whose otherness is initially signaled by their being cultural outsiders and Rome's enemies.[35] While physical and moral whiteness are pedestalized, in relation to Lavinia, for example (1.1.52), those attributes are simultaneously torn down and presented at the onset as chaotic, violent, untrustworthy, "dishonor[able]," (1.1.13) "traitorous," "lawless," (1.1.313) and "quarrel[some]" (1.1.466). Without Aaron to serve as an embankment upon which whiteness can fashion itself and center its victimization in the beginning, it becomes easier to see that white hegemony is hardly as good and pious as it presents itself. It requires Black Aaron, and blackening, as a distracting scapegoat.

The messiness of intraracial relations, and how we are to read the Goths in the opening scene, is further complicated by Tamora's assumption of shared whiteness – what might be understood as the macro-level intraracial conflict that persists throughout the play. The Goth Queen does not immediately recognize that her Goth whiteness is not at first perceived as the same as Roman whiteness, because she invests too much in what Margo Hendricks has referred to as the "idea of commonality."[36] Tamora does not accept that the dominant culture, despite her easy assimilation,[37] could view her as uncivilized and see her for what she is not, as Virginia Mason Vaughan suggests.[38] This failure on her part to understand how "this Rome is also a colonial power,"[39] as Vaughan notes, further denotes the existence of a boundary between the dominant culture and white others, a boundary that becomes evident at this point in the play when the Goth Queen begs the "Roman brethren" to spare her eldest son Alarbus' life from sacrifice (1.1.104).

The usage of "brethren" by Tamora toward the Romans reveals her emphasis on the similarity of racial whiteness, yet it also underscores the significant cultural difference between the two groups that the opening scene reinforces ad nauseam. When Titus, Lucius, and Lavinia use the term "brethren" just a few lines later in reference to the Andronici (1.1.122, 1.1.146, 1.1.160), they clarify that for them the term represents family and that, in the Foucauldian sense, it is exclusionary in its sole consideration of the blood that binds their living and dead kin.[40] Moreover, their usage of brethren establishes a boundary between

colonizer and colonized that mirrors "1590s anxieties about the confrontation between a European power and the 'barbarian' peoples it seeks to conquer."[41] The Andronici's rebuttal of Tamora's attempt at unconditional solidarity among white people is clear in its non-reciprocation: from the Andronici's perspective, the Goths are not brethren, regardless of their shared whiteness. There is something about Goth whiteness that automatically distinguishes them from the Romans.

Despite the difference, Tamora's being of the right "hue" (1.1.262) – a recognizably "fair" hue (1.1.264)[42] – enables her advantageous marriage to Saturninus and her and her sons' "advance[ment]" in Rome (1.1.331). Her socio-political ascension suggests she occupied a lower status as an outsider even in her position as freed prisoner of war. Surely her ascension relates to social class, but I would also argue that it is something more than class since, before coming to Rome, Tamora was a queen, as her son Demetrius reminds us in his lamentation about when "Goths were Goths," when they were the dominant culture and had access to ruling-class power and privilege in a non-Roman domestic landscape (1.1.140). The Goth entrance into Rome denotes a potential shift in their racial perception. This shift is affirmed by the sacrifice of Tamora's eldest son. Moreover, the Goth entrance into Rome marks an undoing of their racialized self-perception, which Tamora thinks she reclaims when Saturninus, opposed to the Andronici "faction" in this moment (1.1.405), as he proclaims, sanctions her becoming "incorporate in Rome" – albeit in a way that does not fully erase her othered status (1.1.463).[43]

What results in Act 1 through the two Roman brothers' marriages is a familial mixture of white people and white others. This mixture keeps intact the early modern prioritization of endogamous racial relations and it makes room for the utilization of emblematically blackened white figures to help define comparatively white Roman goodness.[44] Saturninus claims that "lovely Tamora, Queen of Goths, / That like the stately Phoebe 'mongst her nymphs / Dost overshine the gallant'st dames of Rome" (1.1.316–318). His link between the Goth Queen and Phoebe further speaks to endogamy and Tamora's socio-political elevation.[45] What Saturninus implies is that Tamora, while in Rome, is not of Rome. Nevertheless, the distinction does not preclude the acceptability of her attractiveness because she is of the right hue, an exalted hue. As such, the intraracial beauty contest Tamora wins here adds another layer to the various ways whiteness is in conflict with itself in violent and non-violent ways. Much is at stake for whiteness in *Titus*.

Thus, to return to my earlier engagement with Toni Morrison: *Titus* without Aaron, what *is* it? What does Shakespeare create for us to see and hear when he does not center the Black voice and body in Act 1, and other moments where Aaron does not appear, such as Act 2, Scenes 2 and 4 and Act 4, Scene 3? What is left for analysis if one takes seriously the notion that Aaron, a fictional Black sixteenth-century figure who would have been performed by a white actor in blackface, exists primarily as a distraction? What is left if one sees Aaron primarily as a literary device that draws our attention to this play's engagement with the color-lines – Du Boisian and intraracial – in ways that complicate notions of how manmade racial hierarchies and racial whiteness are constructed? *Titus* without Aaron is Romans fighting Romans, Goths fighting Romans, and Goths fighting Goths. *Titus* without Aaron is white people abusing, deceiving, raping, mutilating, cannibalizing, lying to, and fighting with white people, which "Tamora's unbounded [white] power in Rome" frees her to do.[46] *Titus* without Aaron exemplifies how, according to Jack D'Amico:

> The Moor as villain becomes a convenient locus for those darkly subversive forces that threaten European society from within but that can be projected onto the outsider. The destructive forces of lust and violence are thus distanced by being identified with a cultural, religious, or racial source of evil perceived as the inversion of European norms. And yet to the extent that the alien is imaginatively understood, the audience recognizes that the most stereotypical image mirrors those desires and energies that work from within.[47]

Aaron's Black presence conveniently amplifies what we see in the lusty, violent Goths who serve as an intraracial source of evil that is supposed to contrast with normative Roman, or English, behavior. By having the Goths in the play, *Titus* projects racial stereotypes onto the white other and the somatically different Other.[48] Yet, with the Black man isolated in Act 1, away from the action and discourse, we see that whiteness reflects back to itself what it seems to hate most.

In mirroring itself, whiteness illuminates how projection operates. D. Marvin Jones argues in *Race, Sex, and Suspicion: The Myth of the Black Male* that "Black identity through the lens of the dominant perspective is by definition alien and savage. [The black male] is received not as subject, but as an object onto which whites may project their fears."[49] Without Aaron, blame in *Titus* rests squarely on white people's shoulders, even though the play – with Aaron – does its best to put the onus on Aaron for Rome's collapse, as Matthieu Chapman argues.[50] Scrutinizing

*Titus* without Aaron makes it inconceivable to suggest that he "justly" deserves his torturous death-by-starvation sentence.[51] *Titus* without Aaron renders it impossible to criminalize him and his Blackness, and label him a skilled criminal."[52] And *Titus* without Aaron, especially in Act 1, allows one to call into question the "invisible badge of inherited superiority"[53] white people wear, inside and outside of the play. It is the badge that grants them permission to participate in the white patriarchal and supremacist stereotyping of Black men, Black people, as racially inferior and threatening.[54] Promoting Aaron's "menacing presence in Rome may expose the darker side of Rome, and by extension, England." It is a personal-critical choice with a risky payoff.[55] To be clear: The darker side of Rome exists well before Aaron has a chance to say or do anything other than be a prisoner of war;[56] this makes what seems like a critical hyperfocus on Aaron's Blackness and villainy troubling, especially because it oversimplifies white people's victim status in the play. Aaron has no part in the micro- and macro-level intraracial issues that initiate the play's conflicts. In Act 1, where whiteness is central and centered, Aaron is as innocent as his Black son.[57]

## Convertibility: Goth "Friends," Goth "Foes"

In the field-shifting article "White-limed Walls: Whiteness and Gothic Extremism in Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*," Francesca T. Royster critiques racial whiteness by suggesting that "Tamora is represented as hyperwhite" because of a distinction in her "hue," a term that appears in the play several times.[58] My own thinking on whiteness in *Titus* is indebted to Royster's pioneering central argument that "Tamora's whiteness is racially marked, is made visible," as her reading of *Titus*, in line with earlier calls by Hall and MacDonald for whiteness to be on the critical table,[59] helped lay the groundwork for a more persistent interrogation of whiteness by premodern critical race studies scholars.[60] Royster directly highlights Tamora's otherness and "alien whiteness," reading the Goth body as marked by "hyperwhite[ness]."[61] Yet, to me, the play suggests the Goths, and even some of the Romans at times, exude a whiteness that is less-than (ideal). That is to say, they embody substandard whiteness, particularly as the cultural outsiders. I agree with Royster that there are levels of racial whiteness, and that the play complicates how we can read whiteness. However, I ultimately offer a different view on *Titus*' engagement with whiteness: In the context of the intraracial color-line, I depart from Royster's reading to recognize that the Goths' racialized difference is

an internal matter enabled by what Leonardo refers to as "flexible white-ness."[62] This racialized difference, which is what makes the Goths foes one minute and friends the next, has everything to do with how the Romans interpret the moral character of these cultural outsiders and how they manipulate their position in relationship to the Goths, based on what is on the inside. For example, one can consider how the Goths think and subsequently present themselves as participants, wittingly or unwittingly, in supporting white hegemony.

In being introduced as white others, Tamora's Goth faction is distin-guished from the Romans from the play's beginning, and they are pre-sented as a danger to dominant ideals and idealized whiteness.[63] Tamora is not a chaste Lavinia; and the former's sexually voracious sons are not suitable white men for Lavinia. If Tamora and her sons are pale, somat-ically speaking, as Royster notes, then internally they are as dark as Shakespeare makes Aaron out to be. Mapped onto and into these Goths' bodies, and sometimes Roman bodies, is the intraracial tension the play grapples with throughout. They are white on the outside, but considered dark on the inside from the racist perspective. As such, it is fitting to read the Goths as less-than-ideal white people, or hypo-white people, with respect to their interiority, as defined in Marcus' preliminary description of the "weary wars" the Romans have fought against these inferior white others (1.1.28). Presented as barbarous, lascivious, and marginalized, they are not depicted as better than the Romans in any positive way despite managing to take over the play's center for a bit. And the fact that another set of Goths becomes Lucius' "friends" in Act 5, Scene 1 does not change their barbaric nature, per se. If anything, it is their alleged barbarism, or maybe his own barbarousness, that Lucius taps into when he seeks help from them to reclaim Rome for the Andronici. Like the racist or xeno-phobe who tolerates the existence of Black people when it is convenient, Lucius accepts the Goths on an as needed basis. His acceptance does not require him to erase the Romans' overall or initial negative perception of the Goths, nor does it require him to relinquish his relative white superiority.

Ideal whiteness depends on how one adheres to the tenets of whiteness as prescribed by the dominant culture. The consequence of not adhering is exclusion. Amplifying Thandeka's assertion about white community,[64] Royster asserts that "white group identity is enforced by the threat of exile and fundamental shame."[65] I would add that acceptance into whiteness may also require some form of initiation, as the Goths are only released to Saturninus and freed after one of them, Alarbus, pays with his life the

group's entry fee into the cult of Roman whiteness. To gain admission, Tamora must lose her eldest son; in effect, he must be excluded from the play. After this occurs, Tamora ascends, and she can masquerade as an imperial Roman white woman who is afforded the protection of white men. Scholar Morwenna Carr posits that this is the case in the forest scene (Act 2, Scene 3), when Tamora's sons defend her motherly honor against the Romans, Bassianus and Lavinia, who "see [Tamora's] proximity to Aaron's Black body as discolouring her [external] hyperwhiteness,"[66] a discoloring that cannot be undone once the baby appears. That Tamora gives birth to a physically Black baby also suggests the notion of hypo-whiteness is at play, in that her diminished whiteness makes way for Blackness.[67] Carr's assertion about discoloring underscores my sense that the Goths' whiteness is diminished, for the Goth brothers also maintain proximity to Aaron, their self-proclaimed "tutor" or surrogate parental figure (5.1.98).[68]

Bassianus' and Lavinia's attacks on Tamora's moral character and "honor" are reminders of her difference (2.3.73). "Dismounted from [her] snow-white goodly steed," Tamora finds herself physically and rhetorically in a liminal space in the forest scene: between her white Roman husband, represented in the steed image, and Black Aaron. This love triangle perfectly elucidates how the racial hierarchy works; Tamora and her Goth sons, the white others, occupy a space between hegemonic whiteness and Blackness – the space dedicated to uncouth whiteness. The white woman's sexual, reproductive body is an integral component of this system, which relies on her to generate white offspring. However, once there is incontrovertible evidence she has failed in that role, proof provided in Act 4, Scene 2 when the Black baby emerges from the "surer side" (line 127), it is undeniably evident she betrays whiteness, or maybe whiteness betrays her. For the offense, she finds herself literally "throw[n] forth" and cast out (5.3.198). All who jeopardize the safeguarding of white supremacy – not just the "colored alien,"[69] as Habib labels such figures, but even white people, too – must be written out.[70]

### White Powder, White Power: The White Other Devoured

Goth convertibility is not limited to their being both friends and foes, for it turns out the Goths have a variety of exploitative functions, including culinary uses. In one of *Titus*' most central domestic scenes,[71] the Andronici's revenge takes a gruesome, cannibalistic turn. Having been left in Titus' white hands by their neglectful mother Tamora, Chiron and

Demetrius – disguised as "Rape" and "Murder" (5.2.62) – meet a most horrific fate for their rape and mutilation of Lavinia and for being "a pair of cursèd hellhounds" (5.2.144). The explicit association of the Goth brothers with the demonic, in addition to their dehumanization, is enough to remind us that this play's outsider discourse is nuanced in that it employs a white cultural outsider binary: the good and the bad Goths. And we know these brothers belong to the latter group because of their treacherous deeds, and because Titus labels them "foes" after having them bound like animals (5.2.166). Interestingly, as I noted earlier in this chapter, Titus refers to his own family members as foes in Act 1, Scene 1. These Goths, unlike the ones to whom Lucius appeals for support in Act 5, Scene 1 (lines 1–8), exemplify the type of white others the play seeks to control explicitly, the white other the play must purge due to moral blackness.[72] These Goths, perhaps more so than Aaron, underscore why white hegemony must restore order in Rome if it wants to ensure its survival. A Goth that is a foe is the most dangerous kind of Goth there is. And the Goths' ability to pass as royal white friends is also what makes their presence troubling since they can hide in plain sight. Titus' actions in this scene reveal his awareness of the intraracial threat, but also irreversibly compromise his own whiteness. The Andronici patriarch's deliberate incorporation of the Goth's whiteness into the play's famous pasties make his culinary concoction a noteworthy part of the play's (intra)racial narrative, a point to which I will return shortly.

Before analyzing the white powder Titus produces, I will examine the language and logic that gets him to that point. His discourse is racialized and supports the intraracial color-line's function. With Lavinia by his side, Titus contrasts Roman whiteness with Goth whiteness, or white hegemony and the white other. With palpable anger, he notes:

> Here stands the spring whom you have stained with mud,
> This goodly summer with your winter mixed.
> You killed her husband, and for that vile fault
> Two of her brothers were condemned to death,
> My hand cut off and made merry jest;
> Both her sweet hands, her tongue, and that more dear
> Than hands or tongue, her spotless chastity,
> Inhuman traitors, you constrained and forced.
>
> (5.2.170–177)

Lavinia's predicament echoes *Much Ado*'s fallen woman narrative, although Titus makes it clear Lavinia had no agency. She, like Hero, who is imagined to be stained and blackened because of a lie, is seen as

impure; she is, like *Hamlet*'s Ophelia, muddied,[73] albeit figuratively, and essentially socially dead. Yet, the fault for her uncleanliness lies solely with the Goth brothers. Still, Lavinia represents the play's sullied white hegemonic female figure, one whose father still sees her as "goodly" because of her white skin and Roman blood, the latter reflecting her internal whiteness. The mixing of Goth and Roman blood through the illicit sex – the mixing of white female and white *other* male bodies and body parts – reinforces the play's insistence on making and marking the cultural distinction between Goths and Romans at times, and between ideal and less-than-ideal whiteness.[74] Positioning that point in the context of the intra-racial color-line and white other constructions, I would add that the difference between the play's white people is indeed intraracial, not just cultural, given that Shakespeare portrays the Goths and Romans at times as representing diminished whiteness, thus supporting much of the previously mentioned criteria that define the white other.

Centered in Titus' speech are the wrongs done directly to white Roman men – Bassianus, Martius, Quintus, and Titus – with Lavinia, of course, being an extension of those abhorrent wrongs, an image of violated hegemonic whiteness. I will revisit white male protection of the white(ned) woman in Chapter 3. With three Roman white men killed, three white hands cut off and one white woman's tongue cut out, the Romans have been dis-membered in what Scott Lindsey calls the play's "spectacles of violence."[75] However, nothing strikes Titus as being more of a precious loss in this moment than Lavinia's chastity, which was first her father's white property and then her betrothed Bassianus' property that was stolen by Tamora's sons, and nearly stolen by his brother Saturninus. Lavinia becomes less-than-ideal due to her rape and mutilation. These Roman bodies, limbs, and wounds depict the many ways a select group of white others took power – vocal, sexual, physical, psychological – away from white hegemony. In a different Scene in this same Act, when Lucius refers to a set of Goths as "friends," Titus refers to them as "traitors," thus exposing the Goths' unstable position in this play. As a reminder, Titus also treats his son Mutius like a traitor and kills him as a result. The dominant culture uses the white other to perpetuate whatever narrative needs advancing in a given moment; the Goth status as other helps justify the Romans' contradictory rhetorical categorization of them. And since these particular Goths, Chiron and Demetrius, are "inhuman," they will be treated as such, and inhumanely, too.

To right the wrongs committed against his family members, Titus must war with whiteness and try to overpower this set of Goth foes. He must

destroy the white other whose adopted Roman royalty significantly jeopardizes domestic stability. As this play suggests, a most delectable kind of revenge is found on Titus' dinner table and lies in one of his key cooking ingredients:[76] a powder-like substance made of Chiron's and Demetrius' bones. The bone-white powder Titus creates by "grind[ing Goth] bones to dust" might be read as a racialized substance that represents the literal physical breakdown of the white others. This breakdown ends when Tamora unsuspectingly cannibalizes her sons and is then herself killed. Mixed with Goth blood, a substance also treated as a racial marker in the early modern period,[77] the bone powder signifies grotesque intraracial violence. It also signifies the reclaiming of white hegemonic power in a moment that echoes the "sacrifice" of Tamora's son Alarbus at the play's start (1.1.124).

Chiron's and Demetrius' murders are the continuation of the white others' extermination that was religiously justified earlier in the play. Brought in as prisoners of the state, these othered figures follow a trajectory that demands their annihilation. There is even more urgency directed at their demise than at Aaron's. He receives a slower, more torturous death. Consequently, he gets to have a disruptive voice that forms nearly half of *Titus*' final seventeen lines.[78] The concluding graphic, bloody violence spares Aaron and his son in favor of a sensational display of white-on-white violence. The "pasties" comprised of Chiron's and Demetrius' blood and bones, and eventually served to their mother, indicate a necessary returning of the white other in*to* the white other (5.2.189). There is no space for this kind of uncontrollable Goth in Rome. Lucius suggests as much with his final order that Tamora's body be discarded like a piece of meat for birds and beasts to devour – no proper burial rights for her (5.3.195–200). Yet, like the lingering presence of the Black baby, who remains somewhere in the Roman landscape, as far as we know, there are also Goths still in Rome, the Goths with whom Lucius formed an army. As such, the threat of future interracial overthrow exists, as critics have pointed out, and so, too, does the threat of intraracial overthrow.[79]

## Hyping Whiteness

This chapter concludes by driving home what is the most troubling thing about Goth convertibility as it pertains to their conscious and unconscious role in sustaining white supremacy. Moreover, this chapter speaks indirectly to how white people find it easier to identify with other white people and even with non-Black people.[80] The closer to whiteness, the easier it

seems; that is why the intraracial color-line is a useful theoretical concept for reflecting on race, anti-Blackness, white solidarity, colorism, and so on.[81] In *Titus*, no one identifies with Aaron or his son; sympathy and sensitivity are not ever sincerely afforded to the latter. In a way, then, this chapter shows how Goth convertibility speaks to the power of assimilation and internalized racism, the latter of which operates in the service of white supremacy. Among non-white people, internalized racism is one of many methods used for hyping whiteness and sustaining anti-Blackness. Sustaining racial asymmetry is the main function of the white other, too.

As I think about hyping whiteness, hip-hop and rap culture come to mind, because in that culture, a "hype woman" or "hype man" is a figure who enhances a rapper's performance by offering vocal support, helping to invigorate the crowd and reinforce the artist's lyrics through calculated emphasis.[82] The hype man or woman is not the star of the show; they are a foil, much like the Goths ultimately are for the Romans. However, they play a crucial role in facilitating the transmission of the dominant artist's message, sometimes even exerting more energy than the main act. This figure in hip-hop provides a useful counterpoint for considering when someone or something, like the white other, is being used in the service of something else, like white supremacy. Thinking of the "good" Romans, and even Shakespeare, too, as the main artists, I contend that the best hype man or woman for whiteness is the white other who, as a tool to bolster the superiority of whiteness, amplifies harmful messages about the inferiority of those who do not adhere to the dominant culture's standards and those whom the dominant culture vilifies.

This dynamic plays out in Act 4, Scene 2, when the Black baby appears, and also in Act 5, Scene 1, when a "worthy Goth," as Lucius favorably calls him, brings the captive Aaron and his son before the Goth troops and their newfound Roman ally and leader. Once deemed Rome's enemies, a certain sect of Goths becomes Lucius' "faithful friends" (5.1.1), instead of his and Rome's "foes" (1.1.29), as the now much more complicated intraracial conflict rages on between one presumably good Roman-Goth faction (Lucius and his allies) and a presumably bad Roman-Goth white other faction (Saturninus, Tamora, and her sons). We can also read the conflict as white/white other versus white/white other. By displacing blame onto Saturninus and Tamora, Lucius and the good Goths identify a common enemy and band together as a result.[83] This is how racial, white solidarity works, even outside of the play and in the real world. I think about how anti-Black racism can align poor and rich white people's white supremacist interests, for instance.

There is a mutual reversal of frustration in that the Romans are discontent with Rome/Saturninus, as evidenced by letters Lucius receives (5.1.2–3), and the Goths are discontent with their former ruler, whom they now call "cursèd Tamora" (5.1.16). Even outside of Rome proper, Lucius maintains his intraracial, colonial dominance by likening the Goths to "bees" being "led by their master" (5.1.15). Such figurative language highlights the intraracial power relations that persist throughout *Titus* between Romans and Goths, no matter whether they are deemed good or bad people. As hype figures, the less-than-ideal white people represent, for better or worse, whatever is necessary in a given moment to maintain white hegemonic values and justify certain actions. "Friends" in Act 5, Scene 1, the Goths are literal "foes" (specifically, Chiron and Demetrius) in the next scene (5.2.166). The rhetorical variability is a stark reminder that the dominant culture holds the power to describe whoever it wants however it wants, an idea I revisit in the Conclusion through a brief reading of *The Comedy of Errors* in relationship to racial profiling. Retaining and exerting the power to define and redefine others' identities at will is unquestionably the prerogative of whiteness. This is evident, too, in the next chapter on *Hamlet*.

## Notes

1 *On Whiteness*, The Racial Imaginary Institute (SPBH Essays, No. 4, 2022), 13.
2 From Claudia Rankine, Beth Loffreda and Max King Cap, *The Racial Imaginary: Writers on Race in the Life of the Mind* (Albany, NY: Fence Books, 2016), 17. By kind permission of Claudia Rankine and Beth Loffreda.
3 Hendricks and Parker argue, "'Race' as that term developed across several European languages was a highly unstable term in the early modern period, a period that saw the proliferation of rival European voyages of 'discovery' as contacts with what from a Eurocentric perspective were 'new' and different worlds, the drive toward imperial conquest and the subjugation of indigenous peoples, and the development (and increasingly 'racial' defense) of slavery." Margo Hendricks and Patricia Parker, *Women, 'Race,' and Writing in the Early Modern Period* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 1–2. Also see Hall, *Things of Darkness*.
4 The critical reception of *Titus Andronicus* has changed over the years, and for good reason. I recommend readers engage with the essays in *Titus Andronicus: The State of Play*, ed. Farah Karim-Cooper (London: The Arden Shakespeare, 2019).
5 Amy Scott-Douglass, "Shades of Shakespeare: Colorblind Casting and Interracial Couples in *Macbeth in Manhattan*, *Grey's Anatomy*, and Prison *Macbeth*," in *Weyward Macbeth: Intersections of Race and Performance*, eds.

Scott Newstok and Ayanna Thompson (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 193–202.

6 This is also true in *Much Ado About Nothing*, which I address briefly in the following chapter.

7 All references to Shakespeare's plays come from *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*, 7th edition, ed. David Bevington (New York: Pearson Education, Inc., 2014).

8 There is a history of Black actors in the role of Macbeth and Richard III, and sometimes in ways that play on stereotypes about Black men and violence. See Lisa M. Anderson, "When Race Matters: Reading Race in *Richard III* and *Macbeth*," in *Colorblind Shakespeare: New Perspectives on Race and Performance*, ed. Ayanna Thompson (New York: Routledge, 2006), 98–101.

9 For an extensive analysis of *Macbeth*, sound, whiteness, and race, see Brown and Stoever, "'Blanched with fear.'" Also see essays in *Weyward Macbeth: Intersections of Race and Performance*, eds. Scott Newstok and Ayanna Thompson (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

10 Morrison, *Playing in the Dark*, xii.

11 Hall, *Things of Darkness*, 12.

12 Dyson, *Tears We Cannot Stop*, 82.

13 Ibid., 73–93.

14 Cardon, *The "White Other,"* 2.

15 Despite the flipping of the minority/majority narrative, Disney products such as *Pocahontas* still manage to "reinforce the prevailing status quo." See Patricia A. Turner, *Ceramic Uncles & Celluloid Mammies: Black Images and Their Influence on Culture* (New York: Anchor Books, 2000), 107.

16 Cardon, *The "White Other,"* 147–148.

17 According to Nathan Ron, Erasmus considered "all who are not Christian-European (aside from schismatics, heretics, and Jews) [as] rank barbarians." *Erasmus and the "Other,"* 17.

18 Cardon, *The "White Other,"* 3. If you look at an image of the theatrical release poster for this film, everyone is optically white-skinned. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/My_Big_Fat_Greek_Wedding.

19 The white other occupies a liminal space; what I present as the racial space in between white hegemony and Black in the ternary racial hierarchy that expands the Black/white binary. This liminality helps mark the white other's powerful invisibility as an other. While breaking down the ternary hierarchy with respect to gender is outside this project's scope, I will note that the lens of Black feminism is useful for expanding the ternary system with attention to differences among men and women: (1) white men; (2) white women; (3) white other male; (4) white other female; (5) Black men; and (6) Black women. The white other expands categories of difference and the paradigm that shows how power is unequally distributed and exercised. In the liminal space between Black and white, the white other loses human value and gets pulled toward metaphorical and even literal death. Also outside of this project's scope is full consideration of the position of other racial others, or

non-Black people of color, in the racial hierarchy (and how Black people might other each other intraracially).

20  Engaging ideas posed by feminist Chela Sandoval at a 1982 conference, Kim F. Hall observes how white women can be othered, for example, and thus occupy a precious place in the racial hierarchy that puts them next to white men in terms of color and beneath them in terms of gender. See *Things of Darkness*, 178–179.

21  Francesca T. Royster, "White-Limed Walls: Whiteness and Gothic Extremism in Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*," *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 51.4 (Winter 2000), 432–455; 436.

22  Imtiaz Habib, *Shakespeare and Race: Postcolonial Praxis in the Early Modern Period* (New York: University Press of America, Inc., 2000), 2.

23  Margaux Deroux, "The Blackness Within: Early Modern Color-Concept, Physiology and Aaron the Moor in Shakespeare's 'Titus Andronicus,'" *Mediterranean Studies*, 19 (2010), 88, 86–101.

24  Lara Bovilsky, *Barbarous Play: Race on the Renaissance Stage* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 33.

25  Chapman, *Anti-Black Racism*, 158.

26  David Sterling Brown, "Remixing the Family: Blackness and Domesticity in Shakespeare's Titus Andronicus," in *Titus Andronicus: The State of Play*, ed. Farah Karim-Cooper (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2019), 114.

27  Stoever, *The Sonic Color Line*, 7.

28  Brian Boyd posits that the baby, and by extension Aaron, "so patently enriches the play's characters, conflicts, and concerns." "The Blackamoor Babe: Titus Andronicus, Play, Ballad and History," *Notes and Queries*, 44.4 (December 1997), 492–494.

29  See Charlie Rose's interview with Toni Morrison: www.youtube.com/watch?v=5EQcy361vB8.

30  Ibid.; emphasis added.

31  See Anthony Gerard Barthelemy, *Black Face, Maligned Race: The Representation of Blacks in English Drama from Shakespeare to Southerne* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1987), 91. The metaphorical possibilities for blackness are infinite. Beyond sin and melancholy, blackness in the early modern period could be "deeply synonymous with mental instability, and anger manifesting as violence. Consequently, black becomes a signifier of the potential for destruction, chaos and evil doings, echoing early mythology and manifesting in early modern racial interactions." Deroux, "The Blackness Within," 92.

32  Saturninus calls for his faction to draw their swords again at line 205.

33  Emphasis added. "Villain" appears about twenty times in the play.

34  After the sacrifice of Tamora's eldest child Alarbus, her son Chiron comments, "Was never Scythia half so barbarous" (1.1.131). This commentary on Roman behavior, coming from a marginalized white outsider, also highlights the Romans' potential for savagery, which is connected to the play's racist discourse on Blackness.

35  Smith, *Race and Rhetoric*, 2.
36  Hendricks explains, "Race ensures the idea of commonality by negating or effacing the different interests of a group of individuals. However, there is an inherent paradox in this push for commonality. In order to invest race with meaning, modern societies must frame visible (and, quite frankly, minor) differences among people in terms of antithesis. Consequently, race becomes at once transcendentally immutable and historically mutable." "Surveying 'race' in Shakespeare," in *Shakespeare and Race*, eds. Catherine M. S. Alexander and Stanley Wells (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 1–22; 19.
37  Smith, *Race and Rhetoric*, 130.
38  Virginia Mason Vaughan, "The Construction of Barbarism in *Titus Andronicus*," in *Race, Ethnicity and Power in the Renaissance*, ed. Joyce Green MacDonald (London: Associated University Presses, 1997), 165–180; 165.
39  Ibid., 172.
40  Chapman, *Anti-Black Racism*, 2.
41  Vaughan, "The Construction of Barbarism," 167.
42  See Royster, "White-Limed Walls," 433.
43  Speaking of slaves, which Tamora is not, Orlando Patterson explains "liminal incorporation" and how someone who is socially dead is still considered part of society (*Slavery and Social Death*, 45). Although Patterson's focus is on enslaved people, his discourse maintains applicability to *Titus* with respect to insider/outsider dynamics.
44  Various kinds of endogamy – "social," racial, and "economic," for instance – were important to early modern people, especially with respect to marriage. See Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500–1800, Abridged Edition* (New York: Harper and Row, 1979), 50.
45  Royster, "White-Limed Walls," 433.
46  Christopher Crosbie, "Fixing Moderation: *Titus Andronicus* and the Aristotelian Determination of Value," *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 58.2 (2007), 147–173, 162.
47  Jack D'Amico, *The Moor in English Renaissance Drama* (Tampa: University of South Florida Press, 1991), 2.
48  Virginia Mason Vaughan posits, "When all is said and done, the black characters that populated early modern theatres tell us little about actual black Africans; they are the projections of imaginations that capitalize on the assumptions, fantasies, fears, and anxieties of England's pale-complexioned audiences." *Performing Blackness on English Stages, 1500–1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 5–6.
49  D. Marvin Jones, *Race, Sex, and Suspicion: The Myth of the Black Male* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2005), 59.
50  Chapman argues, "The final thought of the play, then, is not to offer a plan for rebuilding society, but to place the blame for the collapse of civil structures onto the shoulders of Aaron's incorporation" (*Anti-Black Racism*, 173). The

play does this, indeed, but not successfully so when we consider what *Titus* is without Aaron.

51 Part of Thomas Herron's reading of Aaron hinges on error. For example, he claims, "Aaron's final punishment fits his crime and his 'base' nature: at the end of the play, Lucius will stick Aaron where he justly belongs, that is, in his native element, 'fastened' in the 'earth' where he will be half-buried and starved to death as apt punishment for his excessive appetites (5.3.178–82)." "*Titus Andronicus*, Hell and the Elements," *Shakespeare* 13.3 (September 2017), 239–257, 247. Reading this, I wonder at judgments implied in terms like "justly." Why and how is torturing Aaron, torturing the Black man, just, and according to whom?

52 Meg Pearson notes that "the play presents [Aaron] not only as a villain, but as a criminal so skilled that he teaches others his craft." "'That bloody mind I think they learned of me': Aaron as Tutor in "Titus Andronicus," *Shakespeare* 6.1 (2010), 34–51. Such a reading gives Aaron too much credit, for he only "thinks" Chiron and Demetrius learned from him – he does not know. And such a reading undoes that novelty of Aaron that Shakespeare himself instills in his first Black character by having him contradict certain racist assumptions.

53 Mary Floyd-Wilson asserts: "The erasure of Africa from the civilized world, and the reinterpretation of 'blackness' as monstrous and unnatural, allowed for the construction of a European race that united a wide range of colors and complexions under and invisible badge of inherited superiority." *English Ethnicity and Race*, 19. As I have argued elsewhere, white critics are often thought of as thinking and writing from a non-raced perspective. The blending here of Bartels' and Floyd-Wilson's scholarship in particular shows why it is important to reflect on the implications of white racial identity and perspectives.

54 Gustav Ungerer, "The Presence of Africans in Elizabethan England and the Performance of *Titus Andronicus* at Burley-on-the-Hill, 1595/96," *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England*, 21 (2008), 19–55; 39–40. Bartels has suggested that the play "does not challenge the racial stereotype," which suggests a limited understanding of how Aaron's challenges are possible. See Emily C. Bartels, "Making More of the Moor: Aaron, Othello, and Renaissance Refashionings of Race," *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 41.4 (Winter, 1990), 433–454; 442.

55 Emily C. Bartels, *Speaking of the Moor: From Alcazar to Othello* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 68.

56 Pearson herself acknowledges that "for nearly four acts, Aaron holds sway over the play's action." His absence in Act 1 is not accounted for in this critical interpretation of his influence. "'That bloody mind,'" 39.

57 Imtiaz Habib comments on the somatic and ethnic similarity between Aaron and his child (*Shakespeare and Race*, 107). I would add that Aaron's claiming the child is a "reification" of his own racial innocence in Act 1. Lori Schroeder notes, "As Aaron clutches the baby and vows to defend him against all harm,

he also invites Chiron and Demetrius to read and interpret the baby boy before them, whose innocence Aaron himself carefully inscribes." "The Only Witness a Tongueless Child: Hearing and Reading the Silent Babes of *Titus Andronicus* and *The Winter's Tale*," *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England: An Annual Gathering of Research, Criticism and Reviews*, 27 (2014), 221–247; 234.

58 Royster, "White-Limed Walls," 432. See Little, Jr., "Is It Possible to Read Shakespeare through Critical White Studies?," 276–277.

59 For example, Hall touches on the "fetishization of white skin" and other matters related to whiteness in *Things of Darkness*, 211. Joyce Green MacDonald, "Introduction" in *Race, Ethnicity, and Power in the Renaissance*, ed. Joyce Green MacDonald (Teaneck, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1997), 9. Little, following Hall and MacDonald, also puts whiteness on the critical table in *Shakespeare Jungle Fever*, especially in Chapters 1 and 2.

60 Royster, "White-Limed Walls," 433.

61 Ibid., 432–433.

62 Zeus Leonard argues that "*flexible whiteness* has always relied on the creation of levels and shades of whiteness." "Tropics of Whiteness," 6.

63 Royster, "White-Limed Walls," 432–433.

64 Thandeka, *Learning to Be White: Money, Race, and God in America* (New York: Continuum, 1999), 8.

65 Royster, "White-Limed Walls," 436.

66 Morwenna Carr, "Material/Blackness: Race and Its Material Reconstructions on the Seventeenth-Century English Stage," *Early Theatre* 20.1 (2017), 77–85, 85.

67 Barthelemy, *Black Face, Maligned Race*, 95.

68 See Brown, "Remixing the Family," as the essay leans in part on the notion that Shakespeare positions Aaron as a surrogate parent for the white Goth brothers Chiron and Demetrius.

69 Noémie Ndiaye gestures in the direction of threat with respect to the Black baby and white anxiety: "What Lucius sees in the mixed race baby is a menace to the established order of the Roman society, threatening, most exemplarily, to interrupt the rightful royal lineage. Indeed, Aaron's baby is a double threat to the Roman political system, first because he is the fruit of adultery on the part of the empress, second, because Aaron's plan to save his son's life consists in putting a Moorish impostor on the Throne." "Aaron's Roots: Spaniards, Englishmen, and Blackamoors in *Titus Andronicus*," *Early Theatre: A Journal Associated with the Records of Early English Drama*, 19.2 (2016), 59–80; 70.

70 Habib, *Shakespeare and Race*, 94.

71 Other key scenes are 3.2, the fly scene, and 5.3.

72 Vaughan, "The Construction of Barbarism," 174–175.

73 In *Hamlet*, Ophelia famously dies a "muddy death," as Gertrude laments (4.7.184).

74 Brown, "Remixing the Family," 115–116.

75 Scott Lindsey, "'Groaning Shadows That Are Gone': The Ghosts of *Titus Andronicus*," *English Studies: A Journal of English Language and Literature*, 96.3–4 (May 2015), 403–423, 403.

76 Herron asserts, "The just desserts of revenge are served and devoured, as one would expect from the genre: justice demands a hellish end for the protagonists. In *Titus*, the stage enacts these processes on a symbolic (hence loosely allegorical) level: viewers are left at the end of the play agog at the 'hell on stage' the characters have just lived through." "*Titus Andronicus*, Hell and the Elements," 240.

77 There was a range of "meaning and markers" of race in the period. See Akhimie, *Shakespeare and the Cultivation of Difference*, 20.

78 Lindsey explains: "Aaron's talking head disrupts the closing harmony of *Titus* in a way that is even more potent than the 'usurper's cursèd head' (5.7.99) in the final scene of *Macbeth*. Recalling the events of the play's opening, Rome's new leader is haunted not by the 'past honours' of a previous emperor but the 'heinous deeds' of a villainous Moor whose talking head will 'torment Lucius and the Roman public' by "reminding them of his past victories over the Andronici'. If the ghosts of Lavinia and Titus will be laid to rest, then the 'undead' Aaron and Tamora will continue to haunt the play's audiences." "Groaning Shadows," 419.

79 As Royster notes, "other offspring survive" in *Titus,* and so, too, do other adults. "White-Limed Walls," 455. Vaughan also attends to the play's unresolved problems: "*Titus Andronicus* begins with the Roman army's success over the barbaric Goths, but it ends with a new emperor whose power depends upon the loyalty of these same Gothic soldiers. It concludes, in other words, with the triumph of the colonized people and the establishment of a new Rome, an amalgamation of urban and agrarian cultures. In Shakespeare's play, the relation between colonizer and colonized is problematic; the act of gain (conquest) entails a loss of racial and cultural purity." "The Construction of Barbarism," 172.

80 It is no secret that "minorities can without a doubt also identify with and strive to perform whiteness." See Tobias Hübinette and Catrin Lundström, "The Phases of Hegemonic Whiteness: Understanding Racial Temporalities in Sweden," *Social Identities*, 20.6 (2014), 423–437; 426.

81 Sort of like the Irish, who were once considered Black-ish by the English, the Goths are able to capitalize on their whiteness despite being culturally different than the dominant culture. See "An Interview with Noel Ignatiev of *Race Traitor* Magazine, 'Treason to Whiteness Is Loyalty to Humanity,'" in *Critical White Studies: Looking behind the Mirror*, eds. Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1997), 607–612; 608. Barthelemy writes about the linguistic gymnastics the English performed to distinguish themselves from different groups: "Readers of seventeenth-century literature know that while blacks were called 'Moors', all Moors were not black. In fact, almost anyone who was not Christian, European, or Jewish

could have been called a Moor; this includes Asians, Native Americans, Africans, Arabs, and all Muslims regardless of ethnicity." See *Black Face, Maligned Race*, x.

82 For a definition of hype man, see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hype_man.
83 Vaughan, "The Construction of Barbarism," 176.