

Foreign Appetites and Alterity: Is there an Irish Context for *Titus Andronicus*?¹

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This essay is concerned with foreign appetites, particularly those related to food consumption and sexual behaviour depicted as physically or morally reprehensible or strange. These appetites operate as distinct indications of alterity in the early modern period and symbolize individual degeneration and wider social corruption. I will compare Shakespeare's depiction of the Goths in *Titus Andronicus* with early modern English commentaries about the Irish in order to ascertain whether there are valuable and hitherto unexplored connections between the Irish and ancient Germanic tribes and, where the descriptions diverge, what that divergence may tell us about constructions of alterity in the early modern period. I want to begin however by considering a play that is set in England, *Sir Thomas More*, an inherently interesting text since it is likely that part of it represents the only piece of creative writing by Shakespeare that has survived in manuscript.²

Sir Thomas More features a dramatisation of the "Ill May Day" in 1517, when a group of Londoners rioted in protest against the presence of foreigners. Historically Thomas More's role in the incident was minimal and it did nothing to further his political career³ but the dramatized version shows Londoners being calmed by the reasoned arguments and assurances from Sheriff More of London. One of the complaints made by the Londoners is that foreigners "bring in strange roots" which cause disease and threaten to "infect the city with the palsy" (2.3.10, 14).⁴ The foreigners also behave with sexual impropriety, their targets being English women, but the Londoners' objections in 2.3 (thought to have been written by Shakespeare) centre on food: the foreigners will increase food prices because of their monopoly of

the market, they eat more in their own country than in England, and the importation of their strange and dangerous food will prove detrimental to the physical and economic well-being of the English.

In *Sir Thomas More* the foreigners are called "aliens," "strangers," "French," and "Lombards" by noblemen and rioters but the latter have a marked preference for the term "strangers." The word 'stranger,' or a slight variation on it, is used ten times in the opening scene of civil disturbance (lines 7, 26, 31, 42, 57, 73, 89, 94, 111, 131) and they are also referred to as "aliens" (line 120), but notably not accorded their nationalities or first names. Tilney, the Master of the Revels, was not happy with some aspects of the play, he began by crossing out single speeches in the first scene, and then marked the whole of it for deletion.⁵ Tilney objected to the use of the word 'straunger' in 1.3 and insisted it be replaced by 'lombard' (Italian); he also insisted that 'ffrencheman' be replaced with 'lombard' and 'English' with 'man.' The Revels editors, Vittorio Gabrieli and Giorgio Melchiori, claimed that "The purpose of these interventions is clear: to avoid allusions to public disorders against the authorities, and more particularly to any reason for resentment against foreigners"⁶ but this does not explain Tilney's request that 'straunger' and 'ffrencheman' be changed to 'lombard.' In 2.1 the foreigners are referred to as "aliens" (line 20) and as "outlandish fugitives" (line 26) by the rioters but again the favourite word is 'stranger' (lines 2, 22, 42, 46), another way of saying 'foreigner' (*OED* "stranger" *a. 1. a.*), rather than 'Frenchman' or 'Lombard.' In 2.3 the word "stranger" is again repeatedly used by the rioters to describe the foreigners (lines 5, 24, 76). The rioters, then, are unspecific and solipsistic ('not us') about their enemies. By contrast the nobles use a multiplicity of names when referring to the foreigners: in 1.3 they are called "aliens" (lines 11, 60), by their first names (line 17), "hot Frenchmen" (line 44) and "a French man" (line 53). The use of multiple names for the foreigners is also found in the section of Holinshed's *Chronicles* upon which 1.1 is closely based.⁷ This variety of nomenclature may be a way of indicating to the audience that the nobles have a more intelligent and informed understanding of the

situation, something reinforced in the play when, in their absence, More calls the rioters "simple men" (2.3.34) and "silly men" (2.3.36). More, like the nobles, does not refer to the foreigners as 'strangers' in private (he calls them "the amazed Lombards" at 2.2.7) but when trying to appease the rioters he slips into the rioters' nomenclature by using the word 'strangers' (2.3.80, 129, 150).

Although it is unclear why Tilney insisted that "straunger" and "ffrencheman" be changed to "lombard," the emphasis by ordinary Londoners on the foreigners as primarily "strangers" rather than Continental Europeans seems quite deliberate. It is less important where the foreigners come from than that they are foreign; the focus is on their alterity, their strangeness, primarily their un-Englishness. For an English audience 'strangers' might evoke not only Continental Europeans but those foreigners closer to home, namely the Scots, the Welsh and particularly the Irish since, quite apart from open rebellion, it was felt by English commentators that Ireland, unlike Britain (England, Wales, and to a lesser degree Scotland), had not experienced the civilising influence of Roman invasion and so was an especially uncivil environment. In *Titus Andronicus*, a play concerned with Germanic influence in the Mediterranean, the strangers are identified as Goths but in many ways resemble contemporary descriptions of the Irish. Might Shakespeare have been thinking of contemporary Anglo-Irish relations as well as using the classical source material which is undoubtedly integral to the play? It might be useful first to consider some early modern English commentaries on the Irish which may throw light upon the attitudes to strangers expressed in *Sir Thomas More*.

The Londoners in *Sir Thomas More* complain that the foreigners "bring in strange roots" and the focus on food as an indication of alterity in the play bears a marked similarity to early modern English writings on Irish culture. The desire to maintain homogeneity and define borders against the Continental Europeans, as figured in *Sir Thomas More*, ran contrary to the English desire for colonial expansion, with the first focus for England's colonial aspirations being Ireland.⁸

Recent postcolonial theory has tended to consider not only the phenomenon's effect on the colonized, but also its effect on the colonizer. It has long been observed that colonizers are influenced by the people they are colonizing, but since the rise of poststructuralism and deconstruction this observation has tended to be expressed in relation to the binary opposite Self/Other that colonisers take with them when they leave home. Homi Bhabha argued that the stability of this binary opposition is weakened by experience of alien cultures, and in particular hybridization is a recurrent feature of the colonial experience.⁹ England's colonial expansion into Ireland provoked anxieties about hybridity and the fluidity of cultural boundaries and so traditional dichotomising cannot adequately reflect the situation.¹⁰ Although nearby, the Irish were strange to the English. Like the rioters in *Sir Thomas More*, Fynes Moryson linked diet and disease:

Many of the English-Irish, have by little and little been infected with the Irish filthinesse, and that in the very cities, excepting Dublyn, and some of the better sort in Waterford, where the English continually lodging in their houses, they more retaine the English diet.¹¹

If left unchecked diet, an important index of civility, can effect English degeneration; early modern English commentators denounced those Old English (twelfth-century colonists) who had allowed themselves to be influenced by their colonised inferiors and thus stood as a warning to the New English against the threat of degeneration. Absorption of strange foodstuffs would, it was thought, make strange the English body and initiate a wider social corruption which will inevitably undermine English cultural superiority. The Irish diet consisted of what the English considered to be unusual foodstuffs. In his *Britannia* William Camden noted:

When they are sharp set [hungry], they make no bones of raw flesh, after they have squeez'd the blood out; to digest which, they drink *Usquebaugh*. They let their cows blood too, which, after it is curdled, and strew'd over with butter, they eat with a good relish.¹²

In *The Glory of England, or a True description of Blessings, whereby she Triumpheth over all Nations* Thomas Gainsford similarly claimed: "Both men and women not long since accustomed a sauage manner of dyet, which was raw flesh, drinking the blood, now they seeth [boil] it, and quaff vp the liquor, and then take *Vsquebath*."¹³ The distinctive characteristics of the Irish diet are raw meat, and a combination of the familiar, butter, with the unfamiliar, blood. "Usquebaugh" or "Usquebath" is, literally, 'water of life' or whiskey (*OED* "Usquebath" *sb.* 1.a.), the alcoholic beverage made strange by the Gaelic word used to identify it. Camden and Gainsford's descriptions of the Irish appetite for blood concur with what Richard Stanyhurst wrote in Holinshed's *Chronicles*:

Fleshe they deuour without bread, and that halfe raw: the rest boyleth in their stomackes with Aqua vitæ, which they swill in after such a surfet by quartes & pottels: they let their coves bloud, which growne to a gelly, they bake and ouerspread with butter, and so eate it in lumpes.¹⁴

The niceties of English eating habits, that meat should be taken with bread and consumption should be leisurely, are neglected by the Irish and the effect of Stanyhurst's description is to align the Irish with the animals they "deuour" and so alert the reader to the brutishness of the Irish nature.

Detailed descriptions of the common Irish diet by Moryson, Camden, Gainsford, and Stanyhurst function as disturbing accounts of alterity primarily due to their emphasis on the Irish taste for raw flesh and blood which suggests a people capable of that most extreme form of uncivilised eating, cannibalism. Although contemporary English accounts of Irish cannibalism describe a people not naturally disposed to the practice but reduced to survival cannibalism as a result of war, the overwhelming effect of such accounts is the endorsement of English perceptions of the Irish as savage.¹⁵ In *A View of the Present State of Ireland* Irenius gives Eudoxus a detailed explanation of Irish ancestry which, as Richard McCabe has pointed out, reveals Spenser's intention to stigmatise the culture of the Irish through "a pseudo-anthropological investigation into its barbarous 'Scythian' origins."¹⁶

Evidence for this is that the Irish, like the Scythians before them, indulge in blood rituals:

Allsoe the *Scythians* vsed when they would binde anie solempe vowe of Combinacion to drinke a bowle of blodd together vowinge theareby to spende their laste blodd in that quarrell, And even so do the wilde Scottes as ye maie reade in *Buchannan* and some of the Northern Irishe likewise.¹⁷

The main emphasis of Spenser's explanation of Irish ancestry is that the Irish are descended not from the Spanish, as they like to think, but rather from the Scythians and another barbaric northern tribe, possibly the "*Gaules* or *Africans* or *Goths*, or some other of those Northern nations which did ouerspread all Christendome"¹⁸ with the Gauls being the likeliest candidates. Evidence for this is the Irish ritual of blood drinking:

Allsoe the *Gaules* vsed to drinke their enemies blodd and to painthe themselues therewith So allsoe they write that the owlde Irishe weare wonte And so haue I sene some of the Irishe doe but not their enemies but friendes blodd as namelye at the execucion of A notable Traitour at Limericke Called murrough Obrien I sawe an olde woman which was his foster mother take vp his heade whilst he was quartered and sucked vp all the blodd rvnninge theareout Sayinge that the earthe was not worthie to drinke it and thearewith allsoe staped her face, and breste and torne heare Cryinge and shrikinge out moste terrible.¹⁹

Such ritual cannibalism, as opposed to survival cannibalism in times of crisis, is evidence of unrestrained appetite. Spenser was particularly sensitive to perceived English degeneration in Ireland and his focus on blood rituals, passed on from one barbaric people to another, suggests unease that English men might become implicated in Irish cultural practices. Whilst there were European accounts of cannibalism amongst native American tribes, the distinction is one of proximity: barbarity might be expected in the unchartered territory of the New World but the prospect of cannibalism in Ireland, close to England and inhabited by English men, would have been especially disturbing.

English commentaries on the savagery of Irish culture are intriguing in the light of Shakespeare's depiction of the relationship between the

Romans and the Goths in *Titus Andronicus*. The story of the fall of Rome, an archetype of destruction, has parallels with the potential destruction that is closer to home. The danger presented to England by its expansion into Ireland is evident in the story of Rome which acts as a warning against a powerful state overreaching itself. England's expansion is likely to prove its downfall because, like Rome before it, it is incorporating dangerous areas of Germanic influence, namely Germanically-influenced Ireland. The Irish being descended from a powerful, civilised, and Christian people like the Spanish would undermine Spenser's focus on Irish savagery and his attempts to justify extreme measures against the Irish in order to enforce their conformity. Though the Irish and the Spanish share a belief in Catholicism, Irenius emphasises Irish ignorance of Catholic doctrine:

[...] they are all Papists by their profession, but in the same so blindly and brutishly informed, for the most part as that you would rather think them atheists or infidels; but not one amongst an hundred knoweth any grounds of religion and article of his faith, but can perhaps say his pater noster or his Ave Maria, without any knowledge or understanding what one word thereof meaneth [...].²⁰

A connection between the Irish and barbaric Germanic tribes—the “infidels” denounced by Spenser above—is also made in a particularly vitriolic text written by one of Spenser's contemporaries, “The Supplication of the Blood of the English most Lamentably Murdered in Ireland, Cryeng out of the Yearth for Revenge.”²¹ In outlining the atrocities committed by the Irish against the English the author of the “Supplication” aligns the Irish with barbaric tribes only to announce that the Irish are far worse:

Never shall you reade in the stories of the Gothes and Vandalles, in the records of The Turkes and Infidells, in the most barbarous and cruell warres that ever were, such brutishe crueltie, such mounsterous outrage. O that yore highnes might without hazard to yore royall person have seen the demeanour of those savage beasts, for men we can not call them, whose doinges shewe such Contrarietie to manhoode.²²

Nicholas Canny has noted that Henry Sidney, Elizabeth's Lord Deputy in Ireland from 1565 to 1570, compared the Ulster chieftain Shane O'Neill to Huns, Vandals, Goths and Turks and that Thomas Smith, who sponsored a colony in Ireland but never actually visited the country, considered the Irish to be particularly uncivilized.²³ For Smith, the English were like the Romans for their aim was to civilize the Irish just as the Romans had civilized the ancient Britons.²⁴ The Roman parallel had been drawn before by writers of the Italian Renaissance such as Machiavelli who contrasted medieval barbarism with the old Roman civilization in order to justify the destruction of the former.²⁵ England, as the new Rome, was thus the centre of civilization and although no other colonizer in Ireland put forward this view as clearly as Smith, anti-medievalism and the Roman parallel appears often in sixteenth-century English writings on Ireland.²⁶ As Richard McCabe has pointed out, Spenser employs etymological means to show that the Celtic language was spoken by the barbarous hords that overran the Roman empire and this should function as a dire warning for the English.²⁷

The act which most clearly indicates Gothic savagery against Rome in *Titus Andronicus* is the violent rape and mutilation of Lavinia which takes place in the forest or woodland outside the city. That this is also the location of Tamora's sexual liaison with Aaron indicates its association with alterity via degenerate sexual appetites. The opportunities that the forest affords are recognised by Aaron who draws an important distinction between the court which is "full of tongues, of eyes, and ears" and the woods which are "ruthless, dreadful, deaf, and dull [...] shadowed from heaven's eye" (2.1.128-31). As Robert Miola has pointed out, Aaron considers the forest to be

a region of lawless freedom where one can transform imagined schemes into reality. Unlike the court, the forest has no laws of civilization, no obstructions of custom, no censoring public voices to regulate actions.²⁸

The traditional court/woodland dichotomy emphasised by Aaron exists in classical myth and folklore. In Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, an im-

portant source text for *Titus Andronicus*, Philomela is taken by her attacker Tereus from her father's court to "a pelting graunge that peakishly did stand / In woods forgrowen."²⁹ Woodland is also particularly relevant in the context of empire and colonial expansion into Ireland. As Margaret McCracken and R. A. Butlin showed, woodland and bogland provided rich economic resources but also protection for the Irish rebel and hidden dangers for the New English colonist.³⁰ In the *View Irenius* refers to Ireland's "goodly woodes" and remarks that it is "a moste bewtifull and swete Countrie as anye is vnder heaven,"³¹ echoing Titus's reference to the woods as "green" (2.2.2) and Saturninus's reference to "this pleasant chase" (2.3.255). But Spenser's Ireland is also categorised as a land full of dense "wodes" and "perillous places" where travellers have been "Robbed and sometimes murdered,"³² echoing Aaron's estimation of the woodland as a terrible place.

Francesca T. Royster noted that Aaron, an outsider in Roman society, nevertheless speaks like a Roman³³ and it is fitting that this usurper of Roman rhetoric should find for himself an alternative court in the forest which is a locus of power in its own right and from where he can initiate acts of violence against the Roman centre. Rural Ireland similarly provided alternative courts for Irish rebels, places from which to launch attacks against the coloniser and into which English colonists could be lured. Ireland may have functioned as an alternative court on two distinct levels; it has long been considered that those English serving in the Irish colony would have felt themselves disempowered and, although geographically close to England, far removed from the centre of civility. However, this liminality has recently been questioned by Willy Maley, who argued that the viceregal political system in Ireland, unique in early modern Europe, complicated the relationship of court and colony and the choices of English colonists. The viceroy ruled as an absolute monarch and therefore Ireland really was an alternative court for English colonists, not an inferior location.³⁴ Aaron's governance within the woodland on the outskirts of Rome matches woodland as an alternative locus of power for those

alienated from the primary centre of government, both English and Irish and thus indicates a shared experience between coloniser and colonised.

Early modern English commentators on Ireland were preoccupied with degeneration not least because the hybrid (either the degenerate Englishman or the incompletely assimilated Irishman) challenged the strict demarcation between ontological categories. In *Titus Andronicus* boundaries are blurred between civilised Roman and savage Goth and Moor; as Royster has pointed out, it is Aaron who possesses self-discipline and moderation. Aaron is restrained in his sexual relationship with Tamora and his role in the rape of Lavinia is intellectual rather than physical.³⁵ Tamora also defies what might be expected of her as Queen of the Goths when she becomes Roman Empress, masking her savagery under the veil of Roman respectability. In his depiction of Aaron and Tamora, Shakespeare elides simplistic notions of what characterizes alterity. Although Tamora indulges in the barbaric act of cannibalism she eats with ignorant innocence while Titus's monstrosity is shown in the act of making the pie. Similarly, in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Philomela and Procne are innocent victims of Tereus's lust but their act of revenge via the innocent Itys barbarously mirrors that of Tereus on Philomela. The depictions of cannibalism in the *Metamorphoses* and *Titus Andronicus* diverge from Early Modern English accounts of Irish cannibalism in important ways: the Irish, though under extreme duress, are invariably aware that they eat human flesh, whereas those who eat in the *Metamorphoses* and *Titus Andronicus* are ignorant until after the fact. Accounts of Irish cannibalism feature uncooked human flesh, a clear indication of barbarity, whereas both Tereus and Tamora eat cooked human flesh presented in the formal setting of a banquet, perhaps indicating that the barbaric lurks just beneath the surface of the apparently civilized.³⁶ Titus brings Roman civility itself into question and any sense of innate Roman moral superiority is undermined by his involvement in an act that characterizes barbarity.

Before the rape of Lavinia, Titus refers to the woods as "green"

(2.2.2) but after the rape, and with reference to the story of Philomela, he describes the woods as “ruthless, vast, and gloomy,” echoing Aaron’s description of the woodland and effectively aligning Roman and Moorish opinion. Shakespeare’s problematizing of distinctions between the Romans and the Goths begins much earlier in the play, in Titus’s refusal to show mercy by sparing Tamora’s son (1.1.104-17) and in the killing of his own son who stands in his way (1.1.290-92). Tamora’s plea includes the reminder that “Sweet mercy is nobility’s true badge,” and that she is refused it reflects badly on Roman nobility. Whether mercy should be shown to the enemy was a key point of debate in discussions about warfare in Ireland and the promotion of unwavering military strength in the face of human suffering is a dominant feature of Spenser’s *View* where any compassion toward the indigenous population is denounced as weakness.³⁷ That Aaron and Tamora are neither entirely savage nor civilised and that Roman cruelty undermines its claims to civility indicates Shakespeare’s blurring of simple categories and highlights a shared experience between coloniser and colonised.³⁸

William Camden complained that Rome’s failure to reach Ireland made England’s job of civilizing the Irish more difficult:

I can never imagine that this island was conquered by the Romans. Without question it had been well for it, if it had; and might have civilized them. For wheresoever the Romans were Lords and Masters, they introduced humanity among the conquer’d; and except were they rul’d, there was no such thing as humanity, learning, or neatness in any part of Europe. Their neglect of this Island [Ireland] may be charged upon them as inconsiderateness. For from this quarter Britain was spoil’d and *infested* with most cruel enemies [...] [my emphasis].³⁹

The common confusion of ‘infest’ with ‘infect’ (*OED* “infest” v.² 1.b.) serves to draw connections between the perception that England will be overrun by foreigners and the perception that those foreigners will bring disease and cause degeneration. Shakespeare seems to want his audience to regard the Goths, not merely Aaron the Moor, as a different race; as Royster has pointed out, Tamora is represented as “hy-

perwhite" and in this sense her whiteness is "racially marked."⁴⁰ Having found herself at the centre of Roman authority as a result of her miscegenist relationship with Saturninus, Tamora undermines Rome's hierarchical and sexual order. Her relationship with Aaron, also miscegenic, violates social codes as does the interest she demonstrates in the sexual satisfaction of her sons, which Catharine Stimpson has suggested carries incestuous overtones.⁴¹ In Lavinia's rape, physical penetration of the chaste and civilised by the barbaric clearly constitutes an inversion of the colonial relationship and is an enactment in microcosm of the usual colonial situation, often expressed via the woman-as-land trope, since Rome (in the shape of Lavinia) is entered by its savage enemy. Rome's expansionist policy has incorporated savagery into what was an innocuous environment (a 'green,' or virginal, wood) and thus the politically triumphant Romans have provoked the violence which has been directed against them. That the savagery against Lavinia has been encouraged by a woman alerts the audience to the harmful influence of the sexualised foreigner in particular. I do not wish to suggest that Shakespeare is moralising here but rather that he is exploring the consequences of a country's expansionist policy which incorporates the means of its own destruction and thus provokes the violence directed against itself.

Tamora's sexual appetite for Aaron produces a direct threat to the state of Rome via a hybrid child. Aaron's plan to switch his black child with a local Moorish-white child and fool the Roman emperor into considering the latter his own (4.2.152-61) alerts us to the political ramifications of female sexual incontinence. Yet Saturninus is partly to blame for the harm that Aaron intends since he has allowed himself to be attracted to Tamora, the enemy within, choosing her over Lavinia and so leaving himself vulnerable to Moorish-Gothic machinations. As was the case with European reports from the New World, early modern English commentators on Ireland warned against the allurements of native Irish women. In the "Supplication" Irish women are depicted as dangerously seductive in their ability to make English men degenerate, John Derrick warned colonialists to beware of be-

witchment by Celtic women who he characterised as “dissembling elues”⁴² and Spenser advised against “licentious conversing with the Irishe or marrying and fostering with them.”⁴³ In *Titus Andronicus*, the local white child who is the product of a mixed-race relationship will undermine Roman racial purity. Nicholas Canny noted the perception amongst English commentators that Irish sexual behaviour violated the social codes of civilized English society: “Incest was said to be common among them, and Gaelic chieftains were accused of debauching the wives and daughters of their tenants [...]”⁴⁴ While incest is merely hinted in *Titus Andronicus*, the metaphor of Tamora’s voracious sexual appetite is made literal in the pernicious consumption that takes place in the final scene.⁴⁵ As in *Sir Thomas More* there is anxiety about foreign appetites and an association is drawn between strange foodstuffs, degenerate sexual behaviour, and the health of the nation since the foreigners who have been absorbed into native culture are responsible for all kinds of pernicious consumption.

The weak distinction between Roman and Goth, demonstrable in the lack of compassion shown by Titus against Tamora and his own son, begins when Lucius commands that Tamora’s son be burned and that his killers “hew his limbs till they be clean consumed” (1.1.129). His blood-thirsty appetite conjures images of cannibalistic feasts, as does the tomb of the Andronici which consumes human flesh and which Tamora notes will be stained with blood at the sacrifice of Alarbus (1.1.116).⁴⁶ That moral commentary should come from the Goth Chiron (“Was never Scythia half so barbarous” 1.1.131) further blurs the distinction between Roman civility and Gothic savagery. Comparing Lucius’s behaviour with Scythian barbarism prepares us for Lucius’s later hostility toward Rome and his confederacy with the Goths (3.1.298-99). Lucius becomes Rome’s governor but only by incorporating its old enemy, an action suggested by Titus (3.1.284-86) but which, ironically, nullifies his earlier triumph against the Goths and signals Roman degeneration. As governor, Lucius commands that Tamora’s body be abandoned for birds of prey to feed upon (5.3.195-99). This act, intended to mark Tamora’s foreignness by not allowing

her the dignity of a funeral, ironically serves to emphasize Roman savagery. The fate dealt out by Lucius to Aaron is even more telling:

Set him breast-deep in earth and famish him.
 There let him stand, and rave, and cry for food.
 If anyone relieves or pities him,
 For the offence he dies. This is our doom.
 Some stay to see him fastened in the earth.
 (5.3.178-82)

Hunger, urged by Irenius in the *View* as a useful colonial tool in Ireland,⁴⁷ is here used as a means of punishing the barbaric Moor and, as in the *View*, pity toward the victim is to be severely punished. That Aaron's appetite for lust and murder should be punished by starvation constitutes an inversion of Tamora's cannibalistic feast and the pernicious consumption of her body by birds of prey after death. Aaron's defiant response to Roman justice "Ten thousand worse than ever yet I did / Would I perform, if I might have my will" (5.3.186-87) provides no hope for redemption but besides fixing him as an irredeemable villain his comment functions as a warning against the incorporation of foreigners whose appetites may provoke civil disorder.

In *Titus Andronicus* Shakespeare makes distinct connections between foreign influence and pernicious consumption but subtly undermines conventional depictions of alterity by raising pertinent questions about the nature of Otherness, colonial expansion and degeneration: the colonisers are as capable of savagery as those they colonise. In Camden's complaint about the Irish and in *Sir Thomas More* foreigners come to England against the will of the native inhabitants but in *Titus Andronicus* Tamora is brought as a captive to Rome against her will. Might Shakespeare be suggesting that colonial expansion carries with it the risk of incorporating the seeds of its own destruction? In *Titus Andronicus* imperial expansion's eating up of foreign lands includes the ingestion of poisonous strangers, yet simplistic notions of civility and savagery are problematized in the barbaric actions of the Romans. In *The Faerie Queene* Spenser refers to the civilising influence of Brutus on ancient Britain. Before the coming of Brutus the land was a

"saluage wilderness, / Vnpeopled, vnmanurd, vnprou'd, vnpraysd" (2.10.5.3-4) and its inhabitants were barbaric, "But farre in land a saluage nation dwelt, / Of hideous Giants, and halfe beastly men, / That neuer tasted grace, nor goodnesse felt," (2.10.7.1-2). England's savage past is a painful memory which undermines notions of inherent English civility and implies the need for constant vigilance against degeneration. This danger was particularly threatening given the proximity of Ireland which, unlike Britain, had not felt the influence of Roman invasion, a fact which was used by some commentators to explain Ireland's uncivil culture. In *Titus Andronicus* the traffic is in destabilizing and threatening figures whose behaviour undermines a precarious order. This might be read as a warning against unwise expansion abroad, and particularly the incorporation of foreigners, because classical history provides evidence of a particularly spectacular fall. Shakespeare's classical story of the Romans and the Goths is perhaps informed by the contemporary issue of English expansion into Ireland: if the English are not vigilant and if they do not guard against their appetite for unwise expansion they may find themselves at the mercy of foreign appetites which ultimately will consume them.

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NOTES

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²The play exists solely as British Library manuscript Harley 7368, in several hands, and comprising 22 sheets. Most of the writing is in the hand of Anthony Munday, although additional sheets in different hands have been inserted. The front of the first sheet contains a provisional licence from Edmund Tilney, the state censor, requiring alterations before public performance. The additions might represent changes to the play made after Tilney's objections were known but this theory is difficult to sustain because in some ways the changes (such as the re-

writing of the scene in which More quells the rioters) make matters worse. This problem is treated in the Revels edition of the play (Anthony Munday, *Sir Thomas More*, ed. Vittorio Gabrieli and Giorgio Melchiori [Manchester: Manchester UP, 1990] and more fully in Scott McMillin, *The Elizabethan Theatre* and *The Book of Sir Thomas More* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1987).

³Munday, *Sir Thomas More* 6.

⁴All quotations of *Sir Thomas More* are from Munday, *Sir Thomas More*.

⁵Munday, *Sir Thomas More* 17.

⁶Munday, *Sir Thomas More* 18.

⁷Raphael Holinshed, *Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland, 1587*, vol. 3 (London: J. Johnson, 1808) 617-20.

⁸Some critics have claimed that England did not have colonial aspirations. For example, Tobias Gregory maintained that men like Spenser, accused by Stephen Greenblatt and Simon Shepherd of being a poet of empire, were primarily motivated by personal ambition and international Protestant solidarity and that the period was one of perceived isolation and Catholic threat not expansion. Gregory goes on to assert that "Elizabethan England was no more engaged in empire-building in the New World than in the old. As Jeffrey Knapp has reminded us, English efforts at colonization in America were 'dismal failures' until the seventeenth century, particularly by comparison with the vast, lucrative colonies of Spain" (Tobias Gregory, "Shadowing Intervention: On the Politics of *The Faerie Queene* Book 5 Cantos 10-12," *English Literary History* 67 [2000]: 365-97). However, it is unreasonable to assume that failure implies the absence of what Tobias has called "an imperial impulse." It may not have been fulfilled but the impulse was evident nonetheless, as the American examples show.

⁹Homi Bhabha, "The Other Question: The Stereotype and Colonial Discourse," *Screen* 24 (1983), repr. *Twentieth-Century Literary Theory: A Reader*, ed. K.M. Newton (New York: St. Martin's, 1997) 293-301.

¹⁰Drawing upon the theories of Bhabha, David Baker noted that in Ireland the categories carefully created by the colonist—Old English, New English, or 'meere' Irish—were inherently unstable (David J. Baker, "'Wildehirisshe man': Colonialist Representation in Shakespeare's *Henry V*," *English Literary Renaissance* 22.1 [1992]: 37-61, here 38-40). Similarly Andrew Hadfield observed the difficulty in considering nationhood in terms of polarities since no identity—colonizer or native—is pure and both groups will be altered by contact (Andrew Hadfield, *Edmund Spenser's Irish Experience: Wilde Fruit and Salvage Soyl* [Oxford: Clarendon P, 1997], 1-4).

¹¹Fynes Moryson, *An Itinerary Written By Fynes Moryson Gent. [...] Containing His Ten Yeeres Travell Through the Twelve Dominions of Germany, Bohmerland, [...] France, England, Scotland, and Ireland [...]*. (London: J. Beale, 1617) sig. Sss2r.

¹²William Camden, *Camden's Britannia, 1695: A Facsimile of the 1695 Edition Pub-*

lished by Edmund Gibson; [Translated From the Latin], intr. Stuart Piggott, Bibliographical Gwyn Walters (Newton Abbot: David and Charles, 1971) 1048.

¹³Thomas Gainsford, *The Glory of England, or a True Description of Blessings, Whereby She Triumpheth Over All Nations* (London: E. Griffin for T. Norton, 1618) 151.

¹⁴Raphael Holinshed, *The Firste Volume of the Chronicles of England, Scotlande, and Irelande*, 2 vols. (London, 1577) sig. D4r.

¹⁵In *A View of the Present State of Ireland* Irenius describes the starving Irish in Munster as "Anatomies of death" that "did eate the dead Carrions, happie wheare they Coulede finde them, Yea and one another sone after, in so muche as the verry carkasses they spared not to scrape out of their graves" (Edmund Spenser, *Prose Works*, ed. Rudolf Gottfried, *The Works of Edmund Spenser: A Variorum Edition*, vol. 10 [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1949] 158). Writing on Ireland in Holinshed's *Chronicles*, John Hooker reported that after the defeat of the Papal force in 1580 the people of the area surrounding Smerwick ate the bodies of dead men washed up on shore from a shipwreck, so severe was the extent of the famine after the Desmond rebellion (see Raphael Holinshed, *The First and Second Volumes of Chronicles*, vol. 3 [London, 1587] sig. Rjv-Rijr). Similarly Fynes Moryson claimed in his *Itinerary* that after the tactical destruction of Irish corn by English forces a group of soldiers returning home from an expedition against the rebel Brian Mac Art came across "a most horrible spectacle of three children (whereof the eldest was not aboue ten yeeres old), all eating and knawing with their teeth the entrals of their dead mother ." See Moryson, sig. Bbb2r.

¹⁶Richard A. McCabe, "Edmund Spenser, Poet of Exile," *Proceedings of the British Academy* 80 (1993): 100.

¹⁷Spenser, *Prose Works* 108.

¹⁸Spenser, *Prose Works* 84.

¹⁹Spenser, *Prose Works* 112.

²⁰Spenser, *Prose Works* 136.

²¹According to its transcriber Willy Maley, this anonymous text was written during November and December 1598 and is "a record of alleged Irish war crimes, written in the midst of the Nine Years War, and in the wake of the overthrow of the Munster Plantation." See "The Supplication of the Blood of the English Most Lamentably Murdered in Ireland, Cryeng Out of the Yearth for Revenge (1598)," ed. Willy Maley, *Analecta Hibernica* 36 (1995): 7-8.

²²The Supplication of the Blood of the English Most Lamentably Murdered in Ireland, Cryeng Out of the Yearth for Revenge (1598)" 18.

²³Nicholas P. Canny, *The Elizabethan Conquest of Ireland: A Pattern Established 1565-76* (Hassocks: Harvester, 1976) 126.

²⁴Canny 128.

²⁵Canny 129.

²⁶Canny 130.

²⁷Richard A. McCabe, "Translated States: Spenser and Linguistic Colonialism," *Edmund Spenser: Essays on Culture and Allegory*, ed. Jennifer Klein Morrison and Matthew Greenfield (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000) 73.

²⁸Robert S. Miola, *Shakespeare's Rome* (Cambridge: CUP, 1983) 51.

²⁹Geoffrey Bullough, ed., *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*, vol. 6. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973) 52.

³⁰Eileen McCracken, "The Woodlands of Ireland Circa 1600," *Irish Historical Studies* 11.44 (1959): 287; R. A. Butlin, "Land and People, c. 1600," *A New History of Ireland*, ed. T. W. Moody, F. X. Martin and F. J. Byrne, vol. 3 (Oxford: OUP, 1976) 162.

³¹Spenser, *Prose Works* 62.

³²Spenser, *Prose Works* 62.

³³Francesca T. Royster, "White-limed Walls: Whiteness and Gothic Extremism in Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 51 (2000): 438.

³⁴Willy Maley, *Salvaging Spenser* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997) 99.

³⁵Royster 446-47.

³⁶The eating of raw meat is commonly thought of as an indication of barbarity, although Claude Levi-Strauss noted that myths may contrast natural transformations (fresh meat into carrion) with cultural transformations (raw meat into cooked meat) without necessarily privileging the latter. See Claude Levi-Strauss, *The Raw and the Cooked: Introduction to a Science of Mythology*, trans. John and Doreen Weightman, vol. 1 (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1983) 134-43.

³⁷Spenser, *Prose Works* 163.

³⁸Deborah Willis has noted, in the context of modern trauma theory, that the Goths and the Romans share attitudes to honour and revenge and the actions of both are a response to war trauma (Deborah Willis, "'The Gnawing Vulture': Revenge, Trauma Theory, and *Titus Andronicus*," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 53 [2002]: 21-52).

³⁹Camden 967-68.

⁴⁰Royster 432-33.

⁴¹Catharine R. Stimpson, "Shakespeare and the Soil of Rape," *The Woman's Part: Feminist Criticism of Shakespeare*, ed. Carolyn Ruth Swift Lenz, Gayle Greene and Carol Thomas Neely (Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1980) 61.

⁴²John Derricke, *The Image of Ireland with a Discouerie of Woodkarne*, ed. John Small (Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1883) 31.

⁴³Spenser, *Prose Works* 117.

⁴⁴Canny 127.

⁴⁵Incest is associated with unnatural consumption elsewhere in the Shakespeare canon, for example in *Pericles* where the incestuous relationship between Antio-

chus and his daughter is repeatedly imaged as parents eating their children and vice-versa.

⁴⁶I am indebted to *Connotations'* anonymous reader who pointed out that the tomb is cannibalistic.

⁴⁷Spenser, *Prose Works* 244.