Civilized Barbarism
Cannibalism and Rome in *Coriolanus* and *Titus Andronicus*

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May 2016

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I. Acknowledgements and Thanks

I first began considering this thesis while accompanying Professor Holly Pickett on a research trip to England during the summer of 2014. For that opportunity as well as her ongoing support, I want to first thank Professor Pickett. I would also like to thank the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust in Stratford-upon-Avon and Shakespeare's Globe Theatre in London for on-site access to archived performances, photographs, and playbills. Likewise, I am grateful to the London Victoria & Albert Museum's Theatre and Performance Collections and the Sculpture, Metalwork, Ceramics & Glass Department for access to play ephemera. Finally, I want to thank my parents for indulging my interests and always encouraging my efforts.

II. "Into the bowels of ungrateful Rome" – An Introduction

Looking at text and performance, this thesis investigates how cannibalism shapes the identity of Rome in *Coriolanus* and *Titus Andronicus*. This thesis posits that both plays utilize cannibalistic diction to form their Roman settings. After establishing the cannibalistic undertones and overt instances in *Coriolanus* and *Titus*, the thesis focuses on how the motif translates into performance. The first chapter looks at the language of both plays as well as critical analyses in order to understand how Shakespeare positions cannibalism in reference to Rome. The final two chapters look at theatre and film adaptations of *Coriolanus* and *Titus* and ask the question: how does the character of Rome transfer from text to performance? The chapter on *Coriolanus* analyzes four productions (1995, 2003, 2006, 2014) and focuses on director decisions to depart from the Roman setting. Likewise, the chapter on *Titus Andronicus* considers four adaptations (1987, 2003, 2014, 2015), but fixates on borders, on what makes Roman different than Goth, of where myth ends and reality begins.

Although placed side-by-side in William Shakespeare's 1623 First Folio, Shakespeare's "Roman" dramas, *Titus Andronicus* (1594) and *Coriolanus* (1608), share little more than geographical setting, Latin nomenclature, and the most references to "Rome" of any of Shakespeare's plays. Shakespeare's last tragedy, *Coriolanus*, claims historic roots in Plutarch's 1st century CE account of Caius Martius Coriolanus, a Roman general who lived during the height of the Republic. On the other hand, *Titus*, Shakespeare's first steps into tragic genre, examines a fictional hyperbole of Late Antiquity and the latter stages of the Roman Empire. However,

both plays explore the character of Rome as an unruly, carnivorous animal. *Titus* and its “wilderness of tigers” examines selfish characters and revenge plots that ultimately result in a physical act of cannibalism (*Titus Andronicus* 3.1.53). Despite fewer deaths and less ostentatious violent spectacle, *Coriolanus* contains a similar Rome, a “city of kites and crows,” that metaphorically devours its own people (*Coriolanus* 4.5.41). Bookending the modern conception of Classical Rome as well as Shakespeare’s corpus of dramatic tragedies, *Coriolanus* and *Titus* present corresponding character illustrations of Rome in highlighting cannibalistic tropes. Their centuries of distance also allow for a complex rendering of Rome that accounts for the young, turbulent Rome of *Coriolanus* to mature into the callous, lascivious Rome of *Titus Andronicus*.

Coriolanus contains no actual cannibalism, and the cannibalism in *Titus* merely contributes an addition layer to the myriad of taboo violence. Yet, for both plays, cannibalism serves a critical role in molding Rome, as a burgeoning nation in *Coriolanus* and as a dying empire in *Titus Andronicus*. Scattered throughout both plays, references to cannibalism in Coriolanus and Titus show an insatiable Rome, preying on its own people for nourishment. In *Coriolanus*, the cannibalism of Coriolanus carries along an expectation of Romans to give everything for the greatness of Rome, dying themselves so that Rome might prosper. *Titus* positions cannibalism as less about preserving the greatness of Rome and more about achieving individual power. With *Coriolanus* and *Titus* demarcating the beginning and end of Ancient Rome, the contradictory portrayals of Rome show the progress of the nation.

Dramatic adaptations of both plays understate the cannibalistic insinuations of the language and how they correspond to Rome. Performances of *Coriolanus* strive to break away from the Roman world altogether to provide a broader, more universal glimpse regarding republicanism and how politics affect and shape individual identity. In contrast, performances of *Titus* cling to the Roman setting, constricting the extreme violence and taboo mythic themes within a hyperbolic Rome. Yet, for *Titus*, cannibalism in speech and in the final act of cannibalism serve as only an additional layer of the grotesque; in performance, the cannibalism appears as almost an afterthought, the cherry-on-top of a violent, mythic ride. For both plays, performance fails to utilize cannibalism as a tool to create the Roman backdrop.

III. “The bloody flag” – *Coriolanus* and *Titus Andronicus* in Text

Both *Coriolanus* and *Titus Andronicus* gaze into the world of Ancient Rome, striking upon tenets that comprise and define its empire. With *Coriolanus*, Shakespeare provides the eponymous protagonist as an embodiment of Rome, a man whose own search for identity illuminates the backbones of Roman society. *Titus*, on the other hand, shows a heightened spectacle of classical mythology breathed to life, a walking tableau that not only looks back at the pillars supporting Rome, but rebuilds them to excess. The two plays both regard the foundations of Rome through language indicative of cannibalism. However, as *Coriolanus* leans on strictly figurative cannibalism that outlines the importance of self-sacrifice to the maintenance of Rome, *Titus* turns to literal cannibalism that graphically explores Rome through literary myth no longer confined to literature.

Coriolanus approaches the ideas of Rome and sacrifice from a personal perspective. Coriolanus strives to represent the ideal Roman man: devoted to state and family, fearless and eager in the face of war. Volumnia and Coriolanus fashion him into this idealized image and in the process transform him into a representation of Rome itself, powerful and imperfect. While never manifested in dramatic action, the play verbally toys with sacrifice and cannibalism through a Roman lens. Coriolanus himself, while representing a hungry and bloody Rome, explores how he remains part of that hungry creature, but also part of its food source, feeding off its power and feeding its power.

Metaphorical cannibalism infiltrates the language of *Coriolanus* from the first scene. Responding to the discontent of the citizens in the opening scene, Menenius

paints a picture, beginning that “There was a time when all the body’s members,/ Rebelled against the belly” (*Coriolanus* 1.1.85-86). Menenius establishes the metaphor of the belly to illustrate the current revolt. Yet, rather than allowing his comparison to remain implied, he underlines it for the plebeians: “The Senators of Rome are this good belly,/ And you the mutinous members” (*Coriolanus* 1.1.137-138). However, later in the scene, Coriolanus instructs the mob to “Go get you home, you fragments” (*Coriolanus* 1.1.212). The Norton Shakespeare glosses “fragments” as “scraps of uneaten food.” Thus, the first scene creates an image of cannibalism using Menenius’ belly metaphor and Coriolanus’ offhand insults; Rome appears as a starving creature that looks to feed on its own citizens.

Volumnia’s draws ties between bloodshed and food, between men killed in war and eating. The play introduces Volumnia with bloody diction that combines images of war with thoughts of food. Imagining her son in the field, she paints a picture of “His bloody brow/ With his mailed hand then wiping, forth he goes,/ Like to a harvest-man that’s tasked to mow/ Or all or lose his hire” (*Coriolanus* 1.3.31-34). Volumnia places Coriolanus in the role of a field worker, emphasizing a connection between war and food, with fallen men as the ripened harvest under Coriolanus’ sickle. She then refers to mythology and emphasizes that “The breasts of Hecuba/ When she did suckle Hector looked not lovelier/ Than Hector’s forehead when it spit forth blood” (*Coriolanus* 1.3.37-39). As Janet Adelman points out, Volumnia considers that “blood is more beautiful than milk, the wound than the breast, warfare than peaceful feeding” and, thus, Coriolanus “is transformed immediately from infantile feeding mouth to bleeding wound” (Adelman 148).

However, the comparison extends beyond merely holding either blood or milk above the other. By discussing blood and milk within the same breath, Volumnia makes a connection between her role as a mother and Coriolanus' role as a warrior; Volumnia has fashioned Coriolanus to his bloody purpose through her nurture, underlining a part of the Roman mother in producing fighters. She later solidifies herself as the author of Coriolanus' nature when Volumnia contends that "Thy valiantness was mine, thou sucked'st from me" (*Coriolanus* 3.3.129). In this image, with blood as milk, Coriolanus feeds on the blood of war, both of his enemies but also of himself from his own "bloody brow." Volumnia reinforces the cannibalistic undertones of *Coriolanus*' Rome. Yet, from this vantage point, the hunger of Rome remains not necessarily negative, but rather fortifying. Warren Chernaik asserts that Shakespeare presents the "Roman ideal of conduct" as a "basically masculine" set of values intended for "military society, where *virtus* needs to be tested on the battlefield" (Chernaik 2). Thus, Volumnia takes pride in her son jumping from infant to man with blood as his food, the image of a true Roman man.

Volumnia initially describes Coriolanus sucking nourishment from battle, but the concept resurfaces in the words of other characters. Cominius recalls Coriolanus' deeds in battle and declares that "From face to foot/ He was a thing of blood, whose every motion/ Was timed by dying cries" (Coriolanus 2.2.104-106). He reiterates Volumnia's discussion of blood as a source of food; Cominius illustrates a Coriolanus driven by blood, fueled by his killings. Like Volumnia earlier, Coriolanus mixes images of bloodshed with images of harvest when he posits that "In soothing them [rebels] we nourish 'gainst our Senate…Which we ourselves have ploughed

for, sowed, and scattered." He quickly joins his illustration of farming with a reminder to Menenius and the Senators that "I have shed blood." Thus, he correlates the burdensome work of the farmer with that of the soldier. Adelman notes that Shakespeare amends Plutarch's account of Coriolanus to reflect the early 17th century rising price of cereals; whereas in *Lives*, the revolt stems from usury, Shakespeare centers the disquiet around famine caused by high prices of corn (Adelman 146). With this in mind, Shakespeare's *Coriolanus* frequently connects food with blood as a means of underlining the conflict within Rome. However, the connection extends both directions; with the conflict about famine, Shakespeare not only accounts for his contemporary political turmoil, but uses it to mold Coriolanus' character, especially his relationship to his mother and how that portrays Roman nourishment and its connection to cannibalism.

Metaphors continue throughout the dialogues and maintain the cannibalistic imagery of the Rome of *Coriolanus*. Sicinius declares that Coriolanus must die for treachery against the state, and Menenius responds that "Now the good gods forbid/ That our renownèd Rome, whose gratitude/ Towards her deservèd children is enrolled/ In Jove's own book, like an unnatural dam/ Should now eat up her own!" (*Coriolanus* 3.1.291-295). Menenius equates the condemnation of Coriolanus to a mother eating her own children, thus recalling the earlier illustrations painted by Volumnia that mingle blood with milk, death with food. Furthermore, Menenius continues his first metaphor of the belly and the limbs of Rome, speaking of Coriolanus as "a limb that has but a disease -/ Mortal to cut it off, to cure it easy" (*Coriolanus* 3.1.297-298). Menenius sees an alternative to the cannibalistic nature of

Rome as he argues that the cycle of digestion serves to permanently destroy "disease" that could find a more productive solution.

Cannibalism continues to outline the language of *Coriolanus*. As does Menenius' assertion of Rome's sickness in feeding upon its own citizens. Volumnia, distraught about her son's banishment and discontent with the Senator's attempts at placating her declares that "Anger's my meat, I sup upon myself,/ And so shall starve with feeding" (*Coriolanus* 4.2.53-54). Recognizing the futility of her "anger," Volumnia highlights a self-destructive form of cannibalism; she feeds on her own "anger" towards Rome even as she acknowledges the futility, that her anger makes no imprint on the Roman society. Thus, in contrast to her previous comments that mingle bloodshed and food in a positive and powerful way, as the play progresses, Volumnia perceives the illness at the heart of the society, the illness that has purged her son as himself an illness. Even as Volumnia recognizes a cannibalistic element in the nurturing of Coriolanus and a necessary component of becoming a Roman soldier, she also perceives the destruction that it carries along as unsustainable; the cannibalism of Rome has helped form her son but it will also fell him.

The final two acts further color Rome in the light of destructive cannibalism. When Coriolanus seeks entrance to Aufidius' house, he describes the city of his birth as that of "kites and crows," thus casting Rome as ravenous carrion birds scavenging on its own people (*Coriolanus* 4.5.31, 41). The servants later remark that if Coriolanus "had been cannibally given, he might have broiled and eaten him [Aufidius] too" (*Coriolanus* 4.5.187-188). Yet, Coriolanus has already referred to Aufidius as a type of prey when he initially declares: "He is a lion/ That I am proud

to hunt" (*Coriolanus* 1.1.226-227). Even the offhanded comment from the servant underlines Coriolanus as a predator, constantly hungry, constantly hunting as part of his nature. Adelman notes that "in this hungry world, everyone seems in danger of being eaten" (Adelman 154). Rome, itself hungry, seems capable of only producing an equally hungry population, whether hungry for overpriced corn or the blood of warfare. Coriolanus characterizes himself as a predator and the servants of Aufidius' household characterize him as a cannibal, which yet again reinforces the connection between cannibalism and power, cannibalism as nourishment.

Menenius reflects on Coriolanus' rejection of his terms:

> He was not taken well, he had not dined./ The veins unfilled, our blood is cold, and then/ We pout upon the morning, are unapt/ To give or to forgive; but when we have stuffed/ These pipes and these conveyances of our blood/ With wine and feeding, we have suppler souls/ Than in our priest-like fasts. Therefore I'll watch him/ Till he be dieted to my request. (*Coriolanus* 5.2.50-57)

By dwelling on Coriolanus' state of hunger, Menenius fixates on the connection between food and blood. Although he comments that food heats the blood, his words nevertheless carry a cannibalistic undertone. Menenius has approached Coriolanus to seek peace and prevent an assault on Rome, which indicates that Coriolanus still hungers for battle; for Coriolanus, his fodder comes in the form of spilled blood of battle and Menenius highlights that the tenuous cease-fire serves starves Coriolanus of his nourishment. In a way, Menenius has already acknowledged the peace treaty that Coriolanus refers to as "most mortal to him"

(*Coriolanus* 5.3.190. Thus, to an extent, Menenius recognizes the nature of Coriolanus as a man unable to step away from battle, a man who starves in times of peace. Ultimately, the "most mortal" treaty does result in Coriolanus' demise: a fate he foresees and embraces as he remains trapped by his ravenous Rome, the motherland that survives off her own children.

"If thou conquer Rome, the benefit/ Which thou shalt reap is such a name/ Whose repetition will be dogged with curses" Volumnia warns Coriolanus in an attempt to avoid his march on the city (*Coriolanus* 5.3.143-145). Volumnia cautions Coriolanus against attacking Rome not for mortal preservation but for immortal honor. Her language again mingles death with farming, with "reap" indicative of both grains and souls. Yet, out of her speeches of persuasion during 5.3 that stretch beyond 50 lines, her argument about his lasting names strikes most true against Coriolanus' resolve. Both mother and son see a futility in fighting against Rome and understand that rebellion against Rome will satisfy no hunger and lead only to a mortal end. Aufidius echoes Volumnia's language and implication when he talks of how "served his designments/ In mine own person, holp to reap the fame/ Which he did end all his" (Coriolanus 5.6.34-36). Aufidius alludes to Coriolanus impending death, and, like Volumnia, he uses "reap" to discuss Coriolanus' immortal imprint. Hence, when Coriolanus chooses death to protect Rome, he chooses his path understanding that his cannibalistic battle ambitions pale in comparison to Rome's: even as the ideal Roman man, Coriolanus himself must submit to the cycle of sacrifice that Rome demands of its citizens, the sacrifice Coriolanus makes to ensure his immortality. Coriolanus faces death from all sides, but his conviction to seek

death on his own terms, at the ends of enemies rather than Romans, marks his choice to remain a Roman, and remain remembered as a Roman.

For Coriolanus, being Roman means sacrifice. The cannibalistic metaphors that Menenius, Volumnia, and Coriolanus drop throughout the play highlight the Roman state as not just esteeming personal sacrifice for the greater Roman good, but requiring sacrifice of its citizens. By the fifth act, Coriolanus knows he faces death, so his decision to reconcile with Rome and his mother marks a choice between a famous death and an infamous death. In determining the terms of his fate, in ordering Aufidius' men to "stain" their swords on him, Coriolanus chooses Roman immortality rather than forgotten mortality. As the representation of Rome, Coriolanus lays out a state that not only prides itself on the altruism of its citizens, but requires it for its own longevity.

Like *Coriolanus*, *Titus Andronicus* establishes blood and cannibalism as key traits of Roman identity. Marcus introduces Titus as elected to "Roman empery" by "common voice" before he recalls that "Five times he [Titus] hath returned/ Bleeding to Rome, bearing his valiant sons/ In coffins from the field" (*Titus Andronicus* 1.1.33-35). Within the first 50 lines, the play positions Titus as a paragon of Roman masculinity, the people's choice of leader for his bloody service to Rome. However, in *Titus Andronicus*, the focus on Rome fixates less on the virility of the Roman man and more on the society as a whole. As Heather James emphasizes, *Titus* "cites the most Latin, yet hacks up the most bodies" and "trades on puns and body parts" in a combination of "rhetoric and violence" that "relate to the cultural distresses of late imperial Rome" (James 43). While *Coriolanus* seeks to understand

cannibalistic violence as a necessary and honored component of Roman masculinity, *Titus* seeks to understand violence for its own sake, violence as Roman with or without honorable intent.

Notorious for its physical act of cannibalism in the fifth act, *Titus Andronicus*, like *Coriolanus*, turns to cannibalistic language throughout the play. Speaking to his son, Titus wonders: "dost thou not perceive/ That Rome is but a wilderness of tigers?/ Tigers must prey, and Rome affords no prey/ But me and mine. How happy art thou then/ From these devourers to be banishèd!" (*Titus Andronicus* 3.1.52-56). Titus characterizes Rome as cannibalistic by considering the Empire "a wilderness of tigers" and himself and his family as "prey." In the same scene, Titus reflects further on his worth to Rome and declares that "I'll chop off my hands too,/ For they have fought for Rome, and all in vain;/ And they have nursed this woe in feeding life" (*Titus Andronicus* 3.1.72-74). Unlike the portrayal of cannibalism in *Coriolanus* that considers Rome as a mother, Titus considers himself at fault, or at least an instrument to the cannibalistic tendencies of Rome; he reflects that his service to the Empire "nursed" the torment he and his family now endure. Despite his efforts to promote the wellbeing of Rome, Titus finds no reward from Rome, rather he finds himself merely another victim of a starving state.

Likewise, Aaron later considers humans as "prey," when he protects his son and maintains that no one, not even Hercules "Shall seize this prey out his father's hands" (*Titus Andronicus* 4.2.95). Again mingling nurture with "prey," Aaron recognizes the vulnerability of humans in the Roman world of *Titus*. Roman society appears as brazen, already seeking the blood of a child just born; Aaron

acknowledges the danger of Rome, but also fights against it, refusing the cannibalism. Titus refers to the unfortunate inevitability of Roman cannibalism, a truth he eventually embraces in a literal sense when he feeds Chiron and Demetrius to Tamora. Both Roman and outsider view Rome as diseased from its cannibalism, but nevertheless an inseparable component of Roman identity.

Yet, cannibalism itself defines the Rome of *Titus* only as part of a greater mythic tradition. An excessively violent play, *Titus* turns to classical mythology to cast its Rome, with Lavinia exemplifying how Shakespeare animates myth. In her introduction to the Norton edition, Katharine Maus sees a natural correlation between Tamora and Aaron as complementary opposites, yet, James sees a magnetic connection between Tamora and Lavinia: each on one pole of mythic paradigm (James 48). In a way, Tamora's representation of classical mythology serves to establish that of Lavinia's representation, Tamora acting out revenge and Lavinia the brunt of revenge. Tamora ascends beyond the title of Queen of Goths early on as Demetrius warns: "The selfsame gods that armed the Queen of Troy/ With opportunity of sharp revenge/ Upon the Thracian tyrant in his tent/ May favour Tamora, the Queen of the Goths" (*Titus Andronicus* 1.1.136-139). Her son fashions her into not just any captive queen, but into the captive Queen Hecuba whose same royal lineage connects to Aeneas, the mythic founder of Rome. The diction of the assertion additionally focuses on Tamora as a powerful character, pairing her with descriptors like "armed" and "sharp revenge." The lofty claim places Tamora into a mythic tradition and into a specifically Roman mythic tradition, which blends the distinction between Goth and Roman and begs the question: what is "Roman"?

Tamora's character assumes control of a mythic past that occurs just prior to the founding of Rome, just prior to Aeneas' settlement of Italy, bringing the play all the way back to the founding of the future empire. Tamora's establishment within the Roman mythic canon immediately establishes the tone of play, posturing *Titus* as mythic itself, with Tamora positioned as an active and dangerous character of myth.

As Shakespeare portrays Tamora as a dominant mythic woman, he contrasts her with Lavinia who appears as the female opposite of Tamora, with her mythic tradition casting her as a passive victim. Lavinia covers an early Greco-Roman component of mythology as Shakespeare heavily relies on Ovid's account of the raped Greek maiden, Philomela, to underscore Lavinia's dramatic purpose. A tale of mythic rape, in Book 6 of his *Metamorphoses*, Ovid tells of Procne whose husband the Thracian King Tereus, raped her sister, Philomela. Tereus cuts out Philomela's tongue to protect himself, but she reveals the truth to Procne in a woven tapestry. Procne kills her own son, and she and her sister serve him at banquet to Tereus, a cannibalistic act of revenge that transforms all three into different birds. Aaron, speaking with Tamora in the woods, says: "His Philomel must lose her tongue today" (*Titus Andronicus* 2.3.43). He might not be Roman, but Aaron demonstrates an astute learning of Roman mythology that he incorporates into his own vile plans for advancement. Yet, although Aaron makes the first allusion to Philomela, in *Titus Andronicus*, Aaron, Titus, and Marcus all refer to Lavinia as a "Philomel," for a total of six allusions, each one demonstrating understanding of the classical myth.[1] Furthermore, as Marcus notes in his infamously garrulous speech upon discovering

[1] *Titus Andronicus*, 2.3.43, 2.4.38-43, 4.1.47-53, 5.2.193.

the injured Lavinia, she fell to the hands of a "craftier Tereus" who robbed her not just of speech but of her hands as well (*Titus Andronicus* 2.4.41). As Marcus acknowledges the Roman myth, he also implies that her rapists hold knowledge of Philomela's tale. Thus, the allusion yet again blends the Goth faction into a greater Roman mythic history; just like the brothers plant Tamora into Roman tradition by calling her a Hecuba, their gruesome mutilation of Lavinia belies classical understanding and a tendency to view reality through a mythic lens.

However, despite Shakespeare's littered references to Philomela, only the final allusion notes the cannibalistic climax to the tale. Titus regales the gagged Goth brothers with his plans of revenge and notes that "Far worse than Philomel you used my daughter,/ And worse than Progne I will be revenged" (*Titus Andronicus* 5.193-194). Unlike the previous references that dwell on the rape and mutilation, Titus moves beyond the wrong done to Philomela and to the bloody acts that seek to rectify her honor. Hence, the myth remains unrealized until the final act; Aaron, Marcus, and Titus remain content during the first four acts to compare Lavinia to Philomela, to consider how Lavinia has suffered beyond that of Philomela, but none consider how the myth plays out until Titus voices his plans for a feast. Shakespeare suspends the myth to match his own dramatic rendering of it, with the references coordinated to the progress of the play. James refers to Lavinia as a "palimpsest bearing the literary and ideological inscriptions of Vergil, Ovid, Petrarch, and finally, Shakespeare" (James 47). In this light, Shakespeare's treatment of the Philomela story reflects his appropriation of the classical myth, and, as the three men continue to speak of Lavinia's tragedy as "worse than" that of Philomela, Shakespeare

underlines how he amplifies the tale popularized by Ovid. The number of comparisons of Lavinia to Philomela ensures that the motif stands not just as a passing metaphor, but rather a form a legitimate characterization: Lavinia is not just like Philomela, by the end of the play, with the final cannibalistic reference, she becomes Philomela, to exaggerated extent. Shakespeare rewrites his Philomela with extra everything, doubling both the number of assailants and the mutilation: doubling the Roman-ness of his appropriated tale. Additionally, where Menenius speaks of “an unnatural dam” who “should now eat up her own!” *Titus Andronicus* fully realizes the cannibalistic and Roman implications of this fear when Titus prophesizes that Tamora, “your unhallowed dam,/ Like to the earth [will] swallow her own increase” (*Coriolanus* 3.1.291-295, *Titus Andronicus* 5.3.189-90). Transforming metaphoric language into literal action, *Titus* takes the figurative references to mythic rape and manifests them into Roman reality.

But Lavinia becomes not just Philomela: she also appears as a “Lucrece,” and the slain daughter of Virginius as well. Shakespeare laces lines about Lavinia with other raped women, reiterating her casting as a Roman rape trope. While Chiron and Demetrius bicker over Lavinia’s “love,” Aaron tells them that “Lucrece was not more chaste/ Than this Lavinia,” referencing the rape of a married Roman woman who took her own life to maintain her honor her family’s (*Titus Andronicus* 2.1.109-110). Titus also considers the story of Lucrece and wonders “What Roman lord it was durst do the deed./ Or slunk not Saturnine, as Tarquin erst,/ That left the camp to sin in Lucrece’ bed?” (*Titus Andronicus* 4.1.61-63). Not only comparing Lavinia to the raped Lucrece, Titus immediately assumes that some “Roman lord” lays at fault;

without prompting, Titus assigns blame to a Roman of good birth, accepting the rape myth regarding early Roman social and political turmoil as a reality for Lavinia. Titus earlier exhibits no qualms in lashing out against the Goth faction, so his unfounded accusation against a "Roman lord" demonstrates how thoroughly he acknowledges the bleeding line between Roman myth and Roman reality. By setting Lavinia within a world of classical mythology, *Titus Andronicus* looks at rape as inherent to the origin of Rome, and inherently Roman.

"Grandsire, 'tis Ovid's *Metamorphoses*" Young Lucius tells Titus (*Titus Andronicus* 4.1.42). While Young Lucius directly references a book that the maimed Lavinia uses to reveal the cause of her dismemberment, his comment strikes to the heart of the play. Mute Lavinia turns to Ovid to reveal the source of her injury in a moment that demonstrates her self-recognition as a piece of mythic tradition, not as a raped Roman woman, but as a representation of every raped Roman woman from Lucretia to Philomela. Maus comments that "all the characters in the play are acutely conscious of the glorious Roman past as it is enshrined in narrative." However, nothing remains "enshrined" in *Titus*, but rather Shakespeare looses Ovid to run rampant on a Rome that should be removed, at least temporally, from the mythic past, but nevertheless fails to relinquish mythology to the merely figurative. *Titus Andronicus* amplifies literary myth to gruesome dramatic heights, rendering characters like Lavinia into paradigms of bloody tradition.

Coriolanus and *Titus* both use cannibalism as metaphor and reality to provide a snapshot of Roman identity. As an individual man, Coriolanus seeks an impossible autonomy when he strikes against Rome; his choice ultimately hinges between

sacrificing himself to the greater idea of Rome, as one of many, or dying his own man, and falling into obscurity. Cannibalistic diction paints the Roman world of *Coriolanus* in bloody, sacrificial hues, which metaphorically cast Rome in the role of cannibal mother. Where *Coriolanus* allows cannibalism to remain figurative and illustrative, *Titus* pulls it into reality, with Tamora as a real cannibal mother. But it is not Tamora who illustrates the progress of Roman identity: Lavinia and the descriptions that color her character ultimately tune the portrayal of Rome in *Titus Andronicus*. In *Coriolanus*, cannibalism walks beside sacrifice, with each playing off the other, and ultimately arguing for a Rome that demands a type of cannibalistic sacrifice of its people as it requires them to give themselves to the state. As a contrast, *Titus* positions cannibalism within a mythic tradition of rape and revenge, which, although occurring on a more personal scale, nevertheless retain cannibalism as a Roman necessity and a part of heritage. To an extent, *Coriolanus* shows a selfless, metaphorical cannibalism meant to bolster Rome, but *Titus* shows a selfish, literal cannibalism that mends personal wrongs, yet remains Roman in its embrace of living mythology.

In text, both plays establish the character of Rome through cannibalistic statements. *Coriolanus* paints Rome in maternal colors, posturing Rome as an "unnatural dam" who turns upon her own people for sustenance. Through the language of characters like Volumnia and Menenius, cannibalism appears as a natural part of Roman society and a critical component that underpins the principles of Rome. To an extent, *Coriolanus* positions the cannibalistic wont of Rome as an unfortunate, but not entirely untoward, hinge of Roman culture.

Coriolanus discovers he can either grudgingly accept this inevitable cannibalism to ensure his part in Roman immortality, or refuse it and face death knowing he will be forgotten. *Titus* gazes back upon a panoply of stories from Roman myth, investigating cannibalism as not just a Roman tenant, but as a founding concept behind Rome, a building block of the Empire. As *Titus* accepts myth as historic reality, to an extent, it even looks back on real histories, like that of Coriolanus, whose cannibalistic self-sacrifice to Rome secured his place of immortality. *Coriolanus* provides an origin story of sorts, an early glimpse of the meaning of cannibalism to Rome, as *Titus* showcases the centuries worth of results, the burden cannibalism has extolled on Rome.

IV. "I play the man I am" – *Coriolanus* in Performance

With the exception of the Globe 2006 production, adaptations of *Coriolanus* remove the Roman backdrop in favor of exploring either political spectacle or personal epiphany. Additionally, while the idea of personal sacrifice factors into most adaptations, the cannibalistic turns of phrase fall away with the Roman setting and most productions use the diction only to amplify emotion. The 1995 Barbican stage performance trades Republican Rome for revolutionary France, placing an emphasis on the universality of class conflicts. In the same vein, Samurai Japan becomes the Rome of the 2003 Swan production, prompting connections between dissimilar worlds with similar ideas about honor. Likewise, Ralph Fiennes 2011 film trades the ancient Republic for a generic modern backdrop that could represent any contemporary nation in revolt. Furthermore, although the 2006 Globe *Coriolanus* represents the only adaptation to maintain the Roman setting, all four productions explore the idea of Roman identity. Although often subtle, diction about cannibalism helps mold each performance of Coriolanus, and especially lends to the development of the mother-son relationship between Coriolanus and Volumnia. Yet, as each production strays from Rome, so do the cannibalistic undertones, which paints the sacrificial notes of *Coriolanus* in broader strokes, more encompassing of universal human nature rather than merely Roman. Coriolanus the man becomes Rome, a piece of the whole; and the removal of his character from Ancient Rome sheds light on integrity and duty to family and country in a commentary on universal ideals of conduct.

***Coriolanus*, 1995, theatre (Barbican Theatre, David Thacker)**

Exchanging one world of political tumult for another, David Thacker's 1995 *Coriolanus* uses 19th century France to illuminate political truths and personal ambitions. The mixture of seemingly disparate cultures underlines the violence of the Rome of *Coriolanus*. Also, placing the placing the action in revolutionary France highlights the world of *Coriolanus* as emblematic of internal power struggles amplified by outside conflicts.

Even before the action begins, the set direction establishes the underlying design of the adaptation. With the stage painted to represent spilled blood, the set evokes a violent world, tainted with death from the past. A sparse set, a large metal gate represents the only dimensional permanent prop on stage. Furthermore, a larger-than-life reproduction of Lady Liberty (from Eugene Delacroix's 1830 painting, "Liberty Leading the People") commands the background, her form split down the middle to allow actors to enter and exit the stage. Additionally, the play program echoes the set: the exterior cover features a close-up of Coriolanus' face (portrayed by Toby Stevens) covered in blood, and the interior spattered with bloody marks and a sketched insertion of the Lady Liberty. However, combined with the bloody ground, her divided body seems almost severed, that the blood polluting the stage comes from injured Liberty, battered and behind bars. Additionally, Delacroix's Lady Liberty represents a well-known image almost invariably associated with the slew of revolutions in France beginning in the late 1790s. Thus, the design pairs two incongruent pieces: the iconography of revolutionary France and the attitudes of Republican Rome.

The production continues to utilize the set throughout the action. During the first battle of Act 1, the gate changes, becoming a functional part of the set. Thus it represents both the city walls of Corioles while maintaining the metaphor of the cage; Coriolanus finds himself entrapped just like Lady Liberty. Additionally, Thompson further alters the design when Coriolanus affiliates himself with Aufidius (Barry Lynch): no longer confined to the floor, bloodstains cover the walls as well. Commanding much of the stage and the walls, the blood further restricts the world of *Coriolanus*; just as the wrought iron gates restrict the action and cage the actors, the blood serves an equivalent role, but rather than representing a physical inhibition, it represents a psychological obstacle. The extent of the blood recalls Cominius' (Derek Killick) description of Coriolanus "from face to foot" a "thing of blood" during the first battle, establishing a connection between Coriolanus and blood (*Coriolanus* 2.2.104-105). Therefore, the spread of the blood at the outset of Act 4 demonstrates the mental challenges Coriolanus battles in siding with Aufidius: going against Rome to attempt to remain true to himself. Set becomes a dynamic element in the Barbican Coriolanus, serving as an evocative backdrop to the action.

The costumes reinforce the revolutionary flavor that the set establishes. Coriolanus dons a long coat with the trim and labels of a Napoleonic military officer, complete with a matching tricorner hat. In grim contrast to the bright red accents of the bloody set, the ensemble of Coriolanus sticks to blacks and golds, evoking a stern, aristocratic authority (further reinforced by his posh, arrogant Queen's English accent). Just as the costume of Coriolanus underscores his character, the palettes of both Volumnia (Caroline Blakiston) and Virgilia (Monica Dolan) likewise

color their characters, while maintaining the early 19th century fashion; the first scene with Volumnia shows her in a blood red gown that overpowers the virginal white of Virgilia's gown. The contrast underscores the first scene both women appear, with Virgilia praying her husband suffered no wounds in Corioles and Volumnia reproaching her as she declares that blood "more becomes a man/ Than gilt his trophy" (*Coriolanus* 1.3.36-37). Yet, during their last scene, they appear together, Volumnia and Virgila wear matching white dresses fringed with blood at the hem (*Coriolanus* 5.3). The spectacle emphasizes how the blood of Coriolanus ultimately stains all alike; both the warmongering Romans like Volumnia and the discrepant peace lovers like Virgilia end with the burden of Coriolanus' death. Costuming outlines character tropes; Coriolanus appears as stern and patrician, Volumnia as bloodthirsty, and Virgilia as innocently incongruous in a violent and bloody world.

Despite the geographical displacement of the set and costuming, the adaptation retains elements of "Rome." The color red represents a recurring mark of Rome. As the two enemy soldiers swap news during Act 1, Scene 4, their identities become tied to color: red for Roman, blue for Volsci. The color categorization serves a practical purpose in separating the different troops, and also figures into the revolutionary colors of France, thus echoing the set. Yet the choice of red carries an additional thematic significance; from the early Republic through the fall of the Empire, red represented a color heavily associated with Rome. Therefore, blood becomes an almost Roman trope, and thus, the adaptation associates Rome with blood just like Coriolanus. Rome appears further associated with death and

destruction when Coriolanus sides with Aufidius. When asked where he resides, Coriolanus proudly declares the “city of kites and crows” (*Coriolanus* 4.5.41). Spoken with a grave surety, Coriolanus refers to Rome as a city of carrion birds in a boastful manner, a comment meant to instill fear in enemies. The shocked expression of the servant reinforces the ludicrousness of Coriolanus’ claim; Rome appears fixated on the grisly facts of human death, a fact reveled in by the Coriolanus in the 1995 adaptation.

In addition to painting Rome in macabre tones, by incorporating the audience, the production focuses on Rome as a mob. As Menenius (Philip Voss) implores the people in his first speech, he points to the audience when he mentions that the “city has risen” (*Coriolanus* 1.1.39). The audience becomes an active part of the drama, no longer a complacent spectator, but a mob of Romans. Yet, when Coriolanus faces the prosecution of the Senate, he turns his back to audience, pulling the viewers into the scene as an extension of Coriolanus himself (*Coriolanus* 2.2). As the Roman mob, the audience finds itself as the catalyst of uprising, but also the victim of the vengeful justice of the powerful Senate.

Sacrifice plays prominently into the scenes that foreshadow and fulfill the death of Coriolanus. During the “Mother, mother” scene, Coriolanus falls to his knees in a childlike gesture, weeping as he removes his armor, which he punctuates with the line “but let it come” (*Coriolanus* 5.3.183-190). Stevens’ Coriolanus readily accepts an inevitable death, but his distress fails to portray a stoic Roman solider facing a glorious end. The 1995 production not only foreshadows the physical death of Coriolanus, but also focuses on how Coriolanus gives up his own character by

accepting that death; by choosing a passive end, Coriolanus sacrifices his body and his military convictions for the sanctity of Rome. The passive interpretation continues as Coriolanus approaches his death, dropping his sword while he instructs Aufidius: “cut me to pieces” (*Coriolanus* 5.6.112). Coriolanus offers himself as a willing sacrifice, going to death not as a soldier but as a victim. Even though Stevens’ Coriolanus uses his plea as an implication of sacrifice, as with other lines that evoke the act of eating human flesh, his words carry no hint of cannibalism, only of death. In this light, death in Roman world of the 1995 adaptation brings a wasteful, not religious violence.

The actual death comes with stabbing with the first jab done by Aufidius himself and then followed by the other Volsces. However, despite Aufidius’ plea for his men to “assist,” no Volscians help with Coriolanus’ body, and Aufidius struggles alone with the burden, collapsing under the weight just before the lights dim on stage (*Coriolanus* 5.6). Thacker’s bleak end shows a tableau of brutality; although Coriolanus goes to his death spouting words of religious sacrifice, his death comes only with violence and disrespect. Additionally, as the Volscians fail to help Aufidius, the death of Coriolanus appears futile, an end rather than means to an end: Coriolanus wants to die, to offer himself, for Rome, but none of his killers recognize his offering to the state, rather killing him only as an individual man instead of as an embodiment of Rome, his death part of a wasteful cycle.

Thacker’s set and costume deposit the Roman world of Coriolanus into a French arena that outlines the character of Coriolanus. He appears as a man who falls prey to his own pride because of his convictions about the integrity of Rome.

Even after his defection to the Volscian side, Stevens' Coriolanus relishes in the harshness of his Roman upbringing, which leads him to the willing acceptance of his own death, choosing his idea of honor over his mortality. Thus, Coriolanus viewing himself as a true Roman, sees Rome as a fickle nation demanding mortal sacrifice from its citizens. However, as his end comes abruptly and with no noble closure, Coriolanus appears alone in his estimation of Rome as he emulates an idea no other characters recognize.

***Coriolanus*, 2003, theatre (Swan Theatre, David Farr)**

Just like the 1995 Swan/Barbican production, the 2003 RSC Swan adaption of *Coriolanus* departs from a classical artistic design. Costuming and blocking both evoke an eastern, specifically Japanese, flavor. The opening scene depicts Menenius (Richard Cordery) stage center in a long robe, patrician in an East Asian style, with three actors upstage center sitting in chairs, legs confidently spread, facing away from the audience. The appearance of Coriolanus (Greg Hicks) maintains the costuming style of Menenius, with the addition of a katana, a type of Japanese sword. In this way, the production molds the classical, Western struggles of honor and power into an Eastern style of setting that recalls Japanese *kabuki*.[2] Ultimately, the Japanese lens creates a juxtaposition between Eastern and Western values, specifically highlighting honor: is honor a Roman concept or a universal idea?

[2] Kabuki refers to a Japanese theatrical style that dates the 17th century. Film director Akira Kurosawa notably molds western stories and plots into a style that draws heavily on *kabuki*, including his 1957 *Throne of Blood*, an adaptation of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*.

Other elements of the design evoke Japanese *kabuki*. The fighting scenes, rather than remaining mimetic and brutal, appear stylized, almost dance-like. Also, like the 1995 *Coriolanus*, the 2003 production uses color to denote the sides of conflict: red for Rome and blue for Volsces. Although more subtle than the costuming, blocking, and fighting, the colors of each side, shown through war banners and stage lighting, harken back to traditional *kabuki*, which relies on face painting to demarcate character: red for the hero and blue for the villain.[3] Furthermore, the 2003 adaptation utilizes a continuous, but subtle style of metatheatre, a component often featured in *kabuki* theatre. As the first scene with Menenius' speech about the body features actors on stage, but not in the action, many of the transitions include an extended overlap between scenes. Characters remain on stage at the ending of some scenes, even as a new scene unfolds around them; notably, after Coriolanus refers to Aufidius (Chuk Iwuji) as "a lion/ That I am proud to hunt," Coriolanus remains onstage as the setting switches to the Volscian camp, looking at, but not seeing Aufidius with his men (*Coriolanus* 1.1.226-227). Thus, the 2003 Swan *Coriolanus* alludes to a traditional Japanese world, placing the Roman play in a parallel setting of honor.

The Japanese setting comments on the characters of *Coriolanus*, particularly Volumnia (played by Alison Fiske), but the influence of *kabuki* appears understated. The first scene with Virgilia (Hannah Young) and Volumnia includes a hanging birdcage, dangling high above the seated Virgilia (*Coriolanus* 1.3). Considering the set remains otherwise barren throughout the play, the birdcage seems metaphoric, a

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[3] On his art history website, Christopher Agostino discusses the meaning behind traditional *kabuki kamdori* makeup.

commentary on the position of women within Coriolanus. The imagery of a cage evokes images of incarceration, perhaps signifying the limited role that women, especially Virgilia, play in this Ancient Roman world. Or maybe the cage represents Rome in a larger sense, taking the "city of kites and crows" literally, that Rome itself represents a cage for its citizens, further suggested as the birdcage remains present when Coriolanus greets the women (*Coriolanus* 1.3). In addition, the cage features into the set when Volumnia cautions Coriolanus against anger, pleading "Pray, be counsell'd" (*Coriolanus* 3.2.28). Fiske's Volumnia appears cold and resigned, the picture of the ideal demure woman romanticized by Orientalism, but also the ideal Roman mother.

Kabuki plays less into the insinuations of cannibalism, in favor of putting emphasis on Rome. The scene that reunites Coriolanus and Aufidius as allies focuses more on language than on visual design. Coriolanus' line about Rome as the "city of kites and crows" comes out solemnly, but his somber attitude fail to capture the attention of the server with whom he speaks. Coriolanus recognizes Rome as a scavenger, feeding on itself, but he remains alone in his assessment, with the household of Aufidius turning the scene comic. Menenius uses a similar gravity when he pleads with Coriolanus to return to Rome, asking a Volscian soldier: "Has he dined, canst thou tell? For I would not speak with him till after dinner" (*Coriolanus* 5.2.35-36). The line itself seems a distracting technique, but Cordery delivers it with a purpose that indicates another meaning: has Coriolanus satisfied his appetite for rebellion, for eating away at Rome?

The emotional strength dwindles in Coriolanus as he approaches his tragic end and the production steps away from Roman conceptions of honor. Hicks appears weakened before his "O mother, mother" line, bowed and crying. Just as Stevens in the 1995 adaptation, the 2003 Coriolanus accepts his coming death. Yet, the 2003 production shows a Coriolanus not so much willingly conceding to mortality, but a man seeing no escape, and only accepting death because he has no other options. However, pieces of resolve continue to shine through his character: when he instructs the Volscians to "stain all your edges on me," Coriolanus starts removing his jacket, as though he were preparing for a sword fight (*Coriolanus* 5.6.113). Coriolanus never gets the last glorious fight that he seeks as the Volscians shoot him down before Aufidius stabs his prone body. The production excludes the last lines of the play, letting Coriolanus remain onstage rather than being "taken up" by the Volscians (*Coriolanus* 5.6.148). Coriolanus never reaches his honorable end, dying without glory, his body left to scavengers.

Ultimately, by removing the play from a visually classical Rome, the production fixates on the intangible concepts within *Coriolanus*. Through the lens of *kabuki*, Coriolanus' ideas of honor and identity appear less Roman and more human; the stoic character that clings to honor above all else epitomizes both an obstinate Roman general and an obstinate Samurai. The play becomes about the man himself, about Coriolanus' struggle to reach the impossible standards set by his mother and by Rome. The design of the 2003 production channels traditional Japanese *kabuki* as a means of highlighting the idea of honor; it focuses on how the intangible, but ever-present, concept that underlies *Coriolanus* changes when removed from the Roman

setting. Hence, Coriolanus can be transferred to another century and a divergent cultural, but retain ideas of honor and ideals. It is not just Ancient Roman culture that forces man to choose between life and glory; honor above all else shines through as an inherently human trope, not confined to a time or place.

Coriolanus, 2006, theatre (Shakespeare's Globe Theatre, Dominic Dromgoole)

Part of "The Edges of Rome" season, which included *Titus Andronicus* and *Antony and Cleopatra*, the 2006 *Coriolanus* departs from earlier productions with its conservative design. The 2006 Globe Theatre *Coriolanus* approaches the play with a more classical design than either the 1995 or the 2003 adaptations, most notable in the costume. But, like the other adaptations, the 2006 production uses color to visually separate the Romans from the Volscians. Color and other elements like metatheatre establish an "us" and "them" mentality within the production: Roman against Volscian. Ultimately, the division between sides paints the relationship between Coriolanus (Jonathan Cake) and Aufidius (Mo Sesay) as one foils the other.

The costuming mixes Roman flourishes into a predominately Early Modern aesthetic.[4] During battle and during the scenes set in Rome, Coriolanus dons a red velvet, Renaissance surcoat and matching pants with an additional fringe around the thighs that suggests Roman military skirts. When Coriolanus flees to Aufidius, he switches the vibrant red for a black outfit that still dances between Early Modern and classical, but more militarily provocative in leather. The Roman patricians wear

[4] Shakespeare's Globe usually integrates Early Modern components into the costuming of their productions, so the inclusion of Renaissance elements appears less significant than the classical elements.

red togas over Early Modern suits, maintaining the mixture of classical with Renaissance. To an extent, Coriolanus stands out amongst the Roman politicians with his more practical, more military clothing; the production clearly separates the warlike nature of Coriolanus in comparison to the more passively oriented senators. Coriolanus seems as a disparate element amongst the other Romans.

Additionally, color represents an important piece of visual separation as the Volscians wear equivalent ensembles, but with blue replacing red, a visual division of the combatants that the earlier productions also utilize. By using the contrasting colors of Roman and Volscian, the design both practically distinguishes between the divergent sides while creating a clear visualization of "them" to the Roman "us." Furthermore, considering Coriolanus' clothing goes from bright red to black when he departs from Rome as well as the significant differences between his clothing and other Romans, clothing and color assumes important symbolic meaning in the 2006 production. In this way, just as the Volscians represent the foreign "them" to the Roman "us," Coriolanus represents an enigma, beginning as a peripheral part of the Roman "us," with his color coordination, but militarized style, and straying farther away from either the "us" or the "them" when he leaves Rome; Coriolanus becomes a solitary figure, belonging to neither side, merely representing soldierly order and belligerence.

The production fosters the Roman "us" through color, but the adaptation also uses other methods to solidify the distinct sides. By employing metatheatrical tactics that address the audience as Rome, the adaptation enlists the audience as the Roman population, as part of the "us." During the first scene, Menenius (Robin

Soans) pleads with the audience to understand their plight and later, Coriolanus wanders amongst the groundlings as he requests the "voices" of the people (*Coriolanus* 2.3). Thus, just like the use of color, metatheatre forms a solidifying component that casts the Volscians as the other. Additionally, symbolic elements reaffirm the duality present in the adaptation. Most notably, Coriolanus and Aufidius fight each other with two swords each during the first battle scene (*Coriolanus* 1.9). Extending beyond the color and the metatheatre, Coriolanus and Aufidius become the ultimate pair, the ultimate "us" and "them." In this manner, even as the apparel he wears makes Coriolanus himself appear as a type of other, Aufidius contrasts and complements him, an equal adversary. Additionally, during the defection scene, Aufidius and Coriolanus embrace, starting with Aufidius' hands placed on the face of Coriolanus, a gesture caught between a type of affection and a type of enmity, but a statement that declares their equality (*Coriolanus* 4.4). The death scene of Coriolanus cements Aufidius as his foil: facing Aufidius, Coriolanus seems to invite a duel between them with the "stain all your edges on me," only to stagger with a surprise blow to his back and then be tossed to the audience, the Roman mob. Therefore, even as the production generates a division between Roman and Volscian, Coriolanus and Aufidius, the murder of Coriolanus withdraws a final duality, forcing Coriolanus back into the position as a man on his own against the world.

However, the eclectic design appears less obvious in the costuming of Volumnia (Margot Leicester) and Virgilia (Jane Murphy), rather the adaptation relies on acting to convey character. Both women wear Early Modern dresses sashes

from shoulder to hip comprise the only classical element. Despite Volumnia's first outfit, which appears more Early Modern and less classical, Leicester's line delivery creates a Volmnia in the mold of the stoic Roman mother. During her first scene with Virgilia, as she recounts the wounds Coriolanus has received in battle, Volumnia appears gleeful; she revels in the blood her son sheds for Rome triumphing that "blood more becomes a man/ Than gilt his trophy." Yet, during the pleading scene, they both appear in long white sleeveless shift dresses, an image evoking the innocence and piety of Vestal virgins (*Coriolanus* 5.3).[5] In this way, the hint of Rome that the women's clothing conveys in Act 1 becomes more astute as the play unfolds. For Volumnia, the Roman-ness of her apparel in Act 5 rises to meet the Roman-ness of her character present since Act 1; Leicester's clothing in Act 5 reflects her resolve and lust for blood in Act 1.

The presentation of Volumnia's Roman character reflects on Coriolanus himself, and how he responds to the strict nurture of Rome. During the "city of kites and crows" scene, Coriolanus regards Rome with a reverence; he states the line proudly, as if living in Rome is itself a feat worthy of glory. Likewise, when faced with his impending death, Cake's Coriolanus steels his resolve. Beginning the "oh, Mother, Mother" speech with solemnity and tears in his voice, Coriolanus seems to grow when he states "if not most mortal" (*Coriolanus* 5.3.190). Rather than the consigned Coriolanus of Hicks, who begrudgingly accepts his coming mortal end, Cake follows the Coriolanus of Steven's 1995 performance: with Roman strength and a sense of honor in death. Like his mother, Coriolanus views mortal injury with

[5] Vestal Virgins were priestesses of the goddess Vesta and represented the spirit of Rome. They held political autonomy in a world that otherwise subjugated women. Refer to BBC Religion.

a sense of pride, that a wound itself becomes a type of reward. Furthermore, as already shown, the final end illuminates the character interaction between Aufidius and Coriolanus, with Aufidius failing to fulfill Coriolanus' desire for a glorious last stand.

The 2006 production shows a Coriolanus striving towards perfect Roman-ness, striving to be the son his mother so desperately wants, but falling short through Aufidius, through his enemy counterpart. Cake's Coriolanus chases an idea of Rome that emanates from the harshness of his mother, and, as a consequence, he only recognizes honesty in harshness; In this manner, Cake's Coriolanus appears as a man trying to take control of his own fate to "play/ The man I am" by buying into the ideals that Rome and Volumnia have instilled in him, but he never fully reaches that last moment of glory, being literally foiled by Aufidius, who refuses to stand against him in the last moments (*Coriolanus* 3.2.13-14).

***Coriolanus*, 2014, theatre (Donmar Warehouse, Josie Rourke)**

The 2014 Donmar Coriolanus marks a distinctly different interpretation of the text than other earlier productions. Although the adaptation keeps the action in Rome in contrast to the 1995 and 2003 adaptations, the Donmar Coriolanus shows a Rome radically removed from the classical elements present in the 2006 Globe adaptation. The 2014 adaptation uses minimalism in set and costume to create a Rome that feels at once modern and constricting. The set and costume additionally contributes to production's focus on character, especially how Rome has created the character of Coriolanus.

Stark blacks and hard lines make the set design into an industrial Roman landscape. The action commences with Young Coriolanus (Joe Willis) painting a blood red box onstage, creating a stage upon the stage, which features throughout the adaptation, often specifically lighted to denote a room. The crudely painted box reflects the forced order within the Rome of *Coriolanus*: created with blood and brutally confining. The same bloody tones carry onto the back wall of the warehouse stage itself; the red covers the bottom six feet of the brick wall, reinforcing the confinement of the story world.[6] Furthermore, graffiti figures prominently into the backdrop of the first scene with the production using a combination of painted and projected words: "*annona plebis*" (grain of the people) remains scrawled on the wall through much of the action alongside shifting, repeating words, including "dogs," and "eat." During scene changes, loud electronic music underscores the mood as the words flicker quickly against the back wall, bright points in the darkened theatre. To an extent, the energized scene shifts emphasize how this Rome never allows a time of quiet; everything remains in constant motion. The writing combined with the overwhelming red and jumping beats feels both intimidating and frenetic; the writing suggests a populace rebelling against the suppression of the overpower red that represents the city. The 2014 set shows an aggressive Rome in *Coriolanus*, a city oppressing its own people.

The costuming also conveys a world of aggression. Unlike other productions which remove the action from Rome and clearly place it within parallel worlds using

[6] The National Theatre Live filmed version includes commentary on the design. Director Josie Rourke and Set and Costume Designer Lucy Osborne mention they based the design on the idea of the Roman arena. Additionally Osborne explains an historical basis for the red walls: the early Roman authorities wanted "to keep the population in a state of war and terror the whole time."

costume and a blatant use of red for Rome, blue for Volscian, the 2014 adaption approaches wardrobe from a more ambiguous angle and employs a more subtle approach to color. Both sides wear predominately earth tones in mixed contemporary clothing with jagged hemlines, dark combat boots, and dark skinny jeans. Departing from the red and blue color patterns of other adaptations, the Donmar uses purple for Roman and red for Volscian. Coriolanus (Tom Hiddleston) himself enters in a flurry demanding "What's the matter," he appears akin to the plebeians: the same boots, the same tight pants, with only a dark unpolished chest plate, leather vambraces on his arms, and a broadsword slung about his hips betraying his military position (*Coriolanus* 1.1.153). Furthermore, although not a main component of the action, Young Coriolanus in an identical outfit to Coriolanus, excepting the chest plate and vambraces, often appears onstage during scene changes playing with a sword. Additionally, the Volscian army appears much like Coriolanus and the Romans; Aufidius (Hadley Fraser) wears an equivalent ensemble to his Roman counterpart, only small differences in color distinguish the generals; Aufidius dons a red chest plate emblazoned with a gold lion decal to Coriolanus' plain dark brown, and where the Volscian wears a minimal red scarf, the Roman wears a purple one. The costume serves an equalizing purpose, casting citizen and soldier, plebeian and patrician, Roman and Volscian, child and man into similar molds through attire.

Echoing the red tones of the set, stage blood factors into the design. The adaptation literalizes Shakespeare's language involving blood in a way that equates Coriolanus with it. Coriolanus while talking about the "blood I drop," ambles onto

the stage dripping blood onto his chest, his face a study in viscous crimson (*Coriolanus* 1.5.18). He speaks of "this painting," and gestures at his face (*Coriolanus* 1.7.68). Furthermore, the production features an onstage shower following Cominius' (Peter de Jersey) line referencing the "blood upon your [Coriolanus'] visage" (*Coriolanus* 1.10.93). The stage clears and darkens as water falls from the ceiling and Hiddleston's Coriolanus, wincing and favoring his right side, strips off his shirt, and stands under the stream, grimacing until the lights fade completely. Thus, when Cominius regales the senate with tales of Coriolanus as a "thing of blood," the audience already has the image of Coriolanus painted with blood in mind; the lines seem less poetic and more literal (*Coriolanus* 2.2.105). The final scene reinforces the theme of violence with the Volscians hoisting Coriolanus by his feet to hang from the ceiling before Hadley's Aufidius stabs him and stands under the dripping blood, clutching his hands as Coriolanus expires. Although the adaptation maintains a graphic approach to bloodshed throughout the drama, the death of Coriolanus underscores violence as pervading the world of *Coriolanus*. In a way, Coriolanus dies as he lived: a sacrifice to the preservation of Rome. Ultimately, the production emphasizes the presence of violence in the Rome of *Coriolanus*; the use of gratuitous stage blood, which builds on the language of the text, forces blood and violence into the spotlight.

The Donmar production also focuses on the identity of Coriolanus and the idea that "character is destiny."[7] Arriving in Antium, Coriolanus delivers a brief speech before seeking out Aufidius; mostly delivered with a quiet, resigned resolve,

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[7] Attributed to Heraclitus and his writing on fate.

Hiddleston's voice crescendos on the phrase "my birthplace hate I" before dropping again (*Coriolanus* 4.4.23). The moment focuses on both on Coriolanus' exile as well as his upbringing; while he speaks of the strange turn of fate that has brought him to seek his enemy's embrace, the emphasis on the line highlights the role that Rome has played in Coriolanus' tumultuous life. However, he later mentions the "city of kites and crows" with a flippancy that seems to disregard his homeland as a place of carrion birds, as a city that preys on decay. By the time of his "Oh, mother, mother" speech, Hiddleston's Coriolanus has circled back to his earlier assessment of Rome as molding his fate. He carefully and slowly enunciates the opening and his voice hitches as he begins to weep while he talks about his impending mortality and his attitude to "let it come." Coriolanus understands that to protect Rome at this point will result in his own death; he chooses between Rome and himself, accepting death as inevitable but not desirable. Unlike the stoic interpretation of Coriolanus in earlier productions, the Donmar adaptation shows a Coriolanus facing mortality with human trepidation; despite his resolve and his comprehension of impending death, Hiddleston's Coriolanus reacts emotionally to his fate without seeing a way he can both avoid death and save Rome to placate his family.

The 2014 *Coriolanus* makes the eponymous character into a truly tragic figure. Hiddleston's Coriolanus reflects his harsh upbringing at the hands of a cruel mother and a crueler city. Coriolanus accepts death less as a glorious end and more as the only option his rearing allows him. From the harsh set to the militaristic elements in all the costuming, the Donmar shows Rome as a world that only knows violence: bloodshed defines identity from cradle to grave. The adaptation focuses on violence

and the violence of Rome as a means to expose the character of Coriolanus as a victim of his world, one of the many citizens who live and die as sacrifices to the endurance of Rome.

Coriolanus, 2011, film (Ralph Fiennes)

The 2011 *Coriolanus* serves as a character study of a man more than a glimpse of Republican Rome. Director Ralph Fiennes uses the camera and editing to fixate on the character of Coriolanus (Ralph Fiennes) and how he functions as son, husband, and rival. Set in a nondescript, technologically advanced, modern time, the film extensively uses cameras and televisions, which allow for Fiennes to compress scenes in favor of a complex, fast pace. The political and the personal define the themes of the film, but the visual design and setting downplay anything strikingly Roman in favor of showing a generic state struggling with war at home and abroad. Although some of the lines that imply cannibalism, such as Volumnia's "Anger's my meat; I sup upon myself," remain in the script, the film removes most of the blatant references (*Coriolanus* 4.2.54). Character becomes the critical point of the film, and, in a way, Coriolanus himself becomes the glimpse of Republican Rome.

The complex cutting between the three distinct scenes (a man watching the news with Coriolanus, Coriolanus on the television screen, and a woman walking along city streets) demonstrates a connection between all three elements in the opening sequence. A sequence of close-up cuts of a patterned dagger and a whetstone begin the film. Through a panning shot, the shot slowly reveals the back of a seated man watching televised news, the camera moving to his front to linger on the whetstone that he uses to sharpen his blade. Cuts to the television showing a

group of soldiers in modern camouflage walking away from a tank, and the screen pauses on a close-up one uniform with "MARTIUS" embroidered on the right breast. A cut to a close-up of the face of the seated man serves as a reaction image and additionally contrasts the two characters.[8] Additional shots of the television screen interplay with a series of long shots of a woman in modern, nondescript clothing with a backpack, walking through a gritty urban location. The mixture of two separate scenes implies a shared time as well as associating Coriolanus with the woman. Another pause on the televised screen shows a medium shot of Coriolanus with a caption in the lower screen reading "GENERAL MARTIUS SUSPENDS CIVIL LIBERTIES." By placing disparate clips together, Fiennes shows a connection between all three elements while compressing the time.

The convoluted three-part scene cutting peters out to lead into the first dialogues. Another look at the televised news shows rioting under a center caption "A PLACE CALLED ROME." The scene then cuts to another long shot of the walking woman as she enters a boarded up building with graffiti in an empty apartment block. A medium close-up of the First Citizen looking down follows as he requests "Before we proceed any further, hear me speak," which opens the first real scene that the woman has just entered. At the prompt "you are all resolved," the camera makes a series of cuts that reveal the others gathered and the setting: a sparse room, with natural light and occupied by people of various races and ages, including the walking woman, now revealed as the Second Citizen. Like the first scene in the

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[8] The connection between Aufidius and Coriolanus resurfaces later during the same scene when Coriolanus states in a war room meeting that Aufidius "is a lion that I am proud to hunt." The scene ends on a two shot, Coriolanus in the foreground screen left from the back as he virtually faces Aufidius on a television screen, screen right in the background.

darkened room, the camera angles and cutting obscure the scene and generate a furtive, illicit feeling. With Menenius' (Brian Cox) cue to enter the scene, the sound of a television becomes audible, and a cut to a screen in the room shows him appear as part of the news segment. Fiennes cuts the majority of Menenius' speech, keeping the perfunctory assurances that the patricians look out for the commoners, but removing the stomach metaphor entirely. Thus, the scene establishes the main conflict in Coriolanus as a class struggle, not necessarily a particularly Roman one.

Scenes and transitions continue to underline the civil class strife. The Second Citizen's line "suffer us to famish" ends Menenius' role in the first scene, which cuts to a low angle aerial master shot of civilians marching on cobblestones, away from the camera. A series of eye-level medium shots of the protestors follow, depicting some of the marchers holding signs with images of Coriolanus crossed out in red and others with cartoons and the words "DOGS MUST EAT." A close-up three-quarter profile of Coriolanus follows the series of images of the protest, as he halts the progress of the march, standing at the front of a police line in his camouflage uniform. Coriolanus and the First Citizen face each other in a close-up two shot, Coriolanus facing the camera and the Citizen as he demands, "What's the matter" which comes out calmly and almost with a hint of boredom; Fiennes immediately portrays his Coriolanus as supercilious, with no time for the concerns of commoners. Fiennes retains the patronizing tone throughout his speech, like a parent gently lecturing a child. The Second Citizen, standing slightly behind the First, spits towards Coriolanus, and the following cut to a close-up of him shows Coriolanus' face etched with disappointment. As the first two sequences outline the

prevalent class struggle in *Coriolanus*, the first encounter with the man himself reiterates that struggle, and emphasizes his own derogatory opinions of the lower classes.

Televisions and televised news remain important motifs to the progress of the plot and serve to connect separate scenes. Like other transitions, the introduction to Volumnia (Vanessa Redgrave) and Virgilia (Jessica Chastain) uses a television, which subsequently serves to deepen the narrative levels yet again, constricting time and place. Mostly dominated by two shots of Volumnia and Virgilia seated on a leather couch in a stately sitting room, the scene mixes in shots of warfare on screen. When Volumnia does her impression of Coriolanus, at the line "cowards! You were got in fear," the shot shows Coriolanus speaking on the television screen, as if her words are in fact his words for his men. The feeling of Volumnia speaking for Coriolanus continues farther as the scene shifts from the living room to the world of war that Coriolanus currently occupies as he seems to continue her speech with his later lines "you souls of geese,/ That bear the shape of men" (*Coriolanus* 1.5.5-6). In this manner, the world of the women in Rome and of Coriolanus in Antium bleed into one another, as the film emphasizes Coriolanus as truly his mother's son, his own speeches straight from her mouth.

As the dual scene transitions into the first encounter between Coriolanus and Aufidius, the camera work underlines the men as rivals and parallel elements. In the standoff, both Coriolanus and Aufidius disarm, putting away their guns in favor of daggers. Lingering tracking shots show medium close-ups of their faces before leading down to the blades they hold, which recalls the opening shots of Aufidius

sharpening his blade. Rather than adhering to automatic weapons that the modern setting allows, the emphasis on the use of daggers instead requires a grappling style of fighting, that forges an intimacy between the men; not only do Coriolanus and Aufidius fight with blades that force close contact, they do so even with other options afforded. The editing of the fight further reinforces their close connection and highlights Coriolanus and Aufidius as opposites. Long shots establish Aufidius and Coriolanus facing off in a well-lighted and barren concrete room, each man flanked by his own soldiers on either side. Quick cuts between each side portray the Romans and the Volscians as mirror images while the fast pacing of the cuts serves to blend the sides further. Just as the use of television bridges scenes together, the similar pattern of mise-en-scene and editing work shows a visual connection between Coriolanus and Aufidius, Roman and Volscian.

Coriolanus' victorious return to Rome and reunion with his family reintroduces his connection to Volumnia, a motif that the film continues to visit throughout the remaining scenes with camerawork and costume. Set in a modern room of state, the reunion Coriolanus shares with his family takes the private interaction into a public setting, complete with the flash of press cameras. At Cominius' declaration, "Look, sir, you mother!" a medium shot of Volumnia shows her in a ceremonial gray military uniform. Thus, although never discussed nor revisited, the first encounter between Volumnia and Coriolanus in the film reveals her as a retired officer, which contributes another layer of depth to their mother-son relationship; not just a Roman mother obsessed with glory, Volumnia claims military experience of her own. Hence, as she welcomes her son home, Volumnia

welcomes Coriolanus not just as a proud mother, but as a proud veteran, rejoicing in the military accomplishments of the younger generation. Additionally, the camera cuts between medium close-ups of mother and son while Coriolanus kneels in front of Volumnia. Coriolanus' kneeling state makes every shot of him into a high angle one and every shot of Volumnia into a low angle, which creates a sense of point of view angle, but also places Volumnia above Coriolanus, looking down on him in a way that underlines the power she holds over him. Even as Coriolanus' Roman reunion paints him as cut from the same military cloth as his mother, the camera angles reinforce the disparity of their relationship, the control that Volumnia has also held over him.

The film further explores the discrepancy of the relationship between mother and son before the banishment scene and during the final pleading scene. Fiennes Coriolanus shows the first real emotion while he rants against the commons. A series of two shots and medium close-ups accompany and emphasize Coriolanus' speech, with a close-up showcasing the anger in his face while he spits the words "by mingling them with us" (*Coriolanus* 3.1.76). His sense of effrontery continues through the scene with a three-quarter profile medium close-up when he refers to mixing plebeian and patrician as like "bring[ing] in the crows to peck at the eagles," the angle showing the spit flying from his mouth. When Volumnia later councils him to guard his tongue, a two shot of Volumnia and Coriolanus pairs mother and son in profile, looking at each other in a mirror-like pose. She reiterates that he must take control of his spiraling political situation and ignore his intuition in favor of "such words/ That are but roted in your tongue," a command that she calmly, stoically

outlines to him (*Coriolanus* 3.2.55-56). The posing and framing of the scenes visually compare and contrast to one another. When Coriolanus loses his temper in the Senate, Fiennes uses profile shots and close-ups to showcase Coriolanus' explosive mental state, while the profile and close-up shots during Volumnia's lecture emphasize her collected state, with him as a type of reflection of her, gathering his strength from her. Thus, as the mise-en-scene parallels Coriolanus to Volumnia, it places Coriolanus as a type of extension of his mother, volatile without her and contained in her presence.

The banishment from Rome subsequently underlines Coriolanus' dependence on Volumnia in anchoring his character. Fiennes begins the scene with a stoic face: a two shot of Coriolanus with Cominius entering a building for the anticipated speech (which the film does as a television broadcast) shows him enraged but resolutely ignoring the people's shouts of "traitor!" However, by the time Junius Brutus (Paul Jesson) declares Coriolanus an "enemy of the people" to a television studio audience a high angle close-up shot shows Coriolanus starting to lose his hold on his rage. Ultimately, the repeated chanting of the studio audience, "it shall be so!" pushes Coriolanus over the edge and triggers his rant beginning "You common cry of curs" (*Coriolanus* 3.3.124). The camera cuts between the high angle close-up of Coriolanus and various medium and medium close-ups of the studio audience, which portrays the scene from Coriolanus' perspective and shows his weakening mindset. So, even as the gathered people declare Coriolanus a traitor to Rome, a political offense, the cinematography focuses on the deeply personal reaction that Coriolanus experiences. The scene ends with a cut that tracks from

television in the sitting room of Volumnia and Virgilia before Volumnia's horrified face as she watches the debacle. Coriolanus enters the scene still holding onto the resolve of his mother, but the scene ultimately escapes his control, as Coriolanus fails Rome in both a political (represented by the Senate) and personal (represented by his mother) manner.

Coriolanus' banishment in Antium showcases how he uses Aufidius as a type of substitute to Volumnia, revisiting the violent intimacy shared by the men with camera angle and distance. Following the declaration of banishment, Fiennes' immediately cuts to a frame of Coriolanus already on the road away from Rome, skipping over the potential for an emotional farewell. Instead, the "nay, mother" dialogue occurs not at the gates of Rome, but as a voiceover, seemingly from Coriolanus' perspective, while viewing shots of his retreat from Rome.[9] In this manner, Fiennes reestablishes the dependence of Coriolanus as he regurgitates the words of Volumnia, speaking from and through her. The reminder of Coriolanus' dependence allows his subsequent meeting with Aufidius to revisit their previous close relationship. As Coriolanus concludes his reintroduction to Aufidius, set in an underground room with a crude table where the Volscian generals dine, he asserts he cannot live "unless it to be to do thee service." The shot begins as a medium close-up of Aufidius, his face unreadable, but grim, but becomes a medium tracking shot that follows Aufidius as he walks screen left towards Coriolanus. The scene then cuts to a close-up two shot of Aufidius and Coriolanus, almost touching, as

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[9] Fiennes also deviates from the Shakespeare with the entrance into Antium. Coriolanus espies Aufidius on the streets and follows him rather than enquiring about his whereabouts. The film omits the "kites and crows" dialogue.

Aufidius barely audibly whispers that he "contest[s]/ As hotly and as nobly with thy love" as they fought before (*Coriolanus* 4.5.110-111). A later shot further emphasizes the closeness and warlike nature of their relationship as Aufidius requests Coriolanus to meet "our friendly senators," with the pair in a profile two shot, Coriolanus seated with a bowed head as Aufidius stands and shaves Coriolanus' head (*Coriolanus* 4.5.131). The profile shot recalls early shots shared between Coriolanus and Volumnia, which also featured height as an indicator of power and control, this time with Aufidius standing in the place of Volumnia.

The pleading scene reinforces Coriolanus' dependence on his mother and underlines how his wavering allegiance depends more on people than on nation. Volumnia and Virgilia wear long black gowns and coats, with Young Coriolanus in a gray military uniform, similar to Volumnia's earlier suit. Opening with a long shot of the Volscian side, Coriolanus stands screen center in a ruined warehouse room. He wears the casual olive uniform of the Volscians, who form a semi-circle around him; just as Coriolanus has adopted the Volscian uniform, the soldiers have adopted his shaved beard and head, in contrast to Aufidius who maintains the same mop of hair and beard throughout the film. The next shot takes the camera behind Coriolanus in a shallow depth of field view with Coriolanus in focus in the foreground of screen left, his new dragon tattoo visible peaking up from his collar, and Volumnia and Virgilia out of focus in the middle ground screen right.[10] Out of focus Volscian soldiers comprise the remaining background space. The shot places literal focus on

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[10] Coriolanus' tattoo first appears when Menenius pleads with him in 5.2, with a close-up shot of his bare neck. Menenius' line that Coriolanus "is grown from man to dragon: he has wings" is part of the key dialogue following the encounter and which Fiennes moves from its later place in the text (*Coriolanus* 5.4.10-11).

Coriolanus, and, as the angle from behind serves to both emphasize his Volscian tattoo, it also casts the view from Coriolanus' perspective, introducing the scene as critical to Coriolanus' character. Likewise, during the "O, a kiss" dialogue, an extreme close-up repeats the same perspective; Coriolanus screen left from behind, in focus, and Virgilia facing him screen left, out of focus. The visual repetition underscores the perspective of Coriolanus and outlines the emotional factors that affect him in the scene, emotional factors his upbringing has tried to suppress.

Volumnia requests that Coriolanus "hear" their request, to which Fiennes Coriolanus pointedly answers "Aufidius, and you Volsces, mark; for we'll/ Hear nought from Rome in private" (*Coriolanus* 5.3.93-94). A medium shot of Aufidius follows the response; he appears bemused or even suspicious of Coriolanus' behavior. A low angle master shot follows as Coriolanus moves to sit in the only chair afforded by the set: a repurposed barber chair painted gold. His delayed demand of Volumnia "your request" accompanies a low angle long shot of his now seated form, his left leg propped on the chair in an insouciant sprawl, creating an incongruent image of a king holding court, with the camera angle and his loose limbs suggesting power as the dilapidated chair and room speak of disrepair. A subsequent high angle two shot from behind Volumnia shows her in a traditional pose of supplication with a hand on Coriolanus' knee, looking up at him as she begins her speech. As she begins the long pleading asking if "should we be silent," the camera cuts to a medium shot of Tullus, who now appears uncomfortable, or wary of Volumnia and her emotional tactics; Aufidius seems to recognize the power that Volumnia holds over Coriolanus. Furthermore, the reference to silence and the

cut to Aufidius highlight his own silence throughout the proceedings; the scene drastically contrasts the two characters as Volumnia commands long speeches while Aufidius stands reticent, only included through the strategic cuts to his expressions.

The final acquiescence to Volumnia's pleading emphasizes Coriolanus' emotional state and how emotion, not political loyalty drives him. Coriolanus says "O, mother, mother" during an extreme close-up of his emotional face. The shot becomes a tracking close-up that lingers on his fingers entwined with Volumnia's as he kneels before her. At the repeated line "O, my mother, my mother," Coriolanus begins crying in earnest, desperately holding her. By the phrase "most mortal," Coriolanus no longer weeps, but rather speaks softly, in a manner removed from the situation. During the lines about Volumnia, Coriolanus expresses the most emotion, the most lack of control of his situation. However, by the time he references the surety of his death, he has regained a semblance of control over himself; Coriolanus understands death, yet his own emotions disorient him. As earlier scenes outline, especially the ones shared by Volumnia and Coriolanus, without a strong personality guiding him, Coriolanus can only function efficiently in instances that involve violence; his rearing has bred him into an apt soldier, but left him without a depth to understand emotion, which leaves him vulnerable to Volumnia and Aufidius. Thus, rather than emphasizing the political ramifications of the scene, the Roman against the Volscian and where Coriolanus' allegiance truly lies, Fiennes instead tailors the scene to reflect the personal: the stunted emotional life of Coriolanus.

The final murder scene showcases the liminal point that lies within Coriolanus' character and where death and intimacy meet. The mise-en-scene utilizes close-ups of Coriolanus and Aufidius as they stand facing one another on the road between Antium and Rome. Soldiers show in the unfocused background of the shots with Aufidius, whereas in the shots with Coriolanus, he remains conspicuously alone. The cutting of the scene during their argument appears fast-paced and imitates their verbal sparring. Coriolanus' line "stain all your blades on me" breaks the pattern with an extreme close-up of Coriolanus, followed by a cut to a medium shot of Aufidius, now walking away, beyond his soldiers as he quietly tells his men "let him [Coriolanus] die for it" (*Coriolanus* 5.6.120). While the Norton ascribes the line to "All the Conspirators," Fiennes' choice to give the instruction to Aufidius alone reinforces their intimacy that constantly straddles a line between violence and respect. Furthermore, the two consecutive shots emphasize how Coriolanus stands alone in contrast to Aufidius, who has literally turned his back on Coriolanus and retreated amongst his soldiers, abruptly disrupting the closeness of the scene.

Additionally, the editing once again mirrors the action during the actual killing of Coriolanus; a succession of cuts to the film mimics the wounds Coriolanus receives, each punctuated by diegetic stabbing noises. The cuts quickly replace one another as the camera creates a slow broken circle around the attack on Coriolanus, which also follows the slow stagger he makes in his attempts to fend off the assault. A cut to a close-up of Aufidius follows a close-up of Coriolanus' dazed and bloody face. During the same shot, Aufidius walks slowly forward and Coriolanus comes into frame right as Aufidius reveals his dagger and holds Coriolanus face in a similar

manner to how he held him during their meeting in Corioles. The camera stays locked on their close faces, not showing when or where Aufidius stabs. As all sound leaves the scene, the camera circles the pair in a jagged outward-moving spiral, showing their locked eyes and close proximity, a deadly replication of their earlier embrace. The camera tracks as Aufidius lays Coriolanus down on the pavement, the sound cutting back in as he removes the dagger from Coriolanus' stomach. The action ends on a gods-eye medium shot of a truck bed that soldiers off-screen throw Coriolanus' body onto, his lifeless form looking towards the camera. Aufidius speaks no last words, never requests that his men give Coriolanus a proper burial. The editing of the scene begins abrupt and disorienting in imitation of the blows to Coriolanus, yet it additionally serves as counterpoint to the moment of silence shared between Aufidius and Coriolanus.

While the opening of the film and the maintained use of televisions portray the 2011 *Coriolanus* as a political spectacle, Fiennes ultimately latches onto the personal aspects of the play. Extensive use of close-ups and two shots in addition to sequences that volley between shots outline the film as a character study of Coriolanus through his relationships with Volumnia and Aufidius and his perception of mortality. Coriolanus appears as a man alone, trying to navigate his personal battles and political pitfalls that stem from misplaced emotion and his ingrained reliance on violence as the only solution. Fiennes overlaps scenes to convey simultaneous events as well as to amplify Coriolanus' relationships. Notably, during battle Coriolanus appears to literally speak Volumnia's words through voiceover, his rally to battle really her own. In regards to Aufidius, compressed time during

Coriolanus' reunion with Aufidius creates an intimacy between the pair not allowed for by the stage directions, with the camera portraying them alone by excluding the soldiers. Lastly, the final scene utilizes similar changes to connect Aufidius and Coriolanus; the camera yet again creates a false sense of separation with the extensive use of two shots while giving Aufidius the final command to kill underscores the nature of their relationship, the danger of their closeness.

Conclusions

Even as directors shy away from keeping the action of *Coriolanus* within a Roman context, all the productions define a meaning of "Roman" through Coriolanus himself. The 1995 Barbican adaptation uses the French revolution to comment on the pride of the man, with Coriolanus' hubris pushing him to his death. Kabuki informs the 2003 Swan performance in order to look at honor, with the tragedy of Coriolanus as a choice of honor above self, the state above the individual. The 2006 Globe and 2014 Donmar productions both emphasize identity and self-determination. Yet, the Donmar production puts additional focus on the tragedy of Coriolanus, with an ending that shows the inevitably of violent sacrifice, but a desire to move beyond a Rome that demands blood. Likewise, the 2011 film acts as a character study of Coriolanus, but driven more by interpersonal relationships than by Coriolanus alone. All the adaptations show less interest in Coriolanus as a Roman, and more interest in Coriolanus as a man. As each production amends and alters the Roman setting of the play, they focus on the humanity within Coriolanus not

necessarily as a product of Roman principles, but a product of any austere and harsh upbringing.

V. "I am Revenge, sent from below" – *Titus Andronicus* in Performance

Where productions of *Coriolanus* avoid the Roman setting in favor of allegory, theatre and film adaptations of *Titus Andronicus* cling to Rome. An investigation of what motivates violence, the 1987 Swan adaptation contrasts the ritualistic nature of Roman violence with that of the emotional Goth violence. In another vein, while the 2003 Royal Shakespeare Theatre *Titus* incorporates costume and staging to divide Roman from Goth, the production focuses on the divisions within Rome itself; more than Roman contrasting Goth, the adaptation explores the division between Roman reality and mythology. The 2014 Globe and 2015 Cambridge University productions likewise use violence as a tool, exploring character and Roman psyche through visually graphic staging. Taymor's 1999 film takes an aggressive stance on the extremity of Roman violence and the apathy of Romans, dabbling with costume and set that straddles centuries, while making violence a uniting front between Roman and Goth. The three theatre productions from 1987, 2003, and 2014 all generate a sense of the other, pitting civilized Roman against barbaric Goth. But otherness permeates all five adaptations as they delve into violence and what bloodshed reveals about Roman identity, particularly in regards to liminal limits, testing boundaries of nation and individual, myth and reality.

Titus Andronicus, 1987, theatre, (Swan Theatre, Deborah Warner)

The Swan Theatre 1987 *Titus Andronicus* contrasts the Romans with the Goths. Titus (Brian Cox) enters borne atop a horizontally aligned ladder, immediately setting up a cultural hierarchy as the ladder also serves to imprison the Goth

prisoners among the rungs. Presenting a tableau that clearly distinguishes between the conquerors and the conquered, the 1987 production establishes a visual metaphor; the ladder carrying Titus provides no possibility for ascending, providing oppression rather than opportunity. Furthermore, the accents set characters apart: Titus' slight Scottish lilt makes him seem especially warlike while the cockney accents of Chiron (Richard McCabe) and Demetrius (Piers Ibbotson) characterize them as lower class and uncouth, which reiterates the ladder metaphor. Thus, the adaptation creates a juxtaposition between the Goths and the Romans, much like the "us" and "them" mentality of the 2006 *Coriolanus*. However, violence becomes an equalizing factor, with both sides embracing violence as a normal and necessary component of society.

Even as the production separates the Goths and the Romans, the portrayal and discussion of violence demonstrates no obvious differences between how the Romans and how the Goths view violence. Despite Tamara's (Estelle Kohler) fruitless pleas with Titus for the life of her son, all the characters, both Goth and Roman, view the sacrifice of Alarbus (Steven Elliot) with a resignation, with an acceptance, their facial expressions schooled and cool (*Titus Andronicus* 1.1). Indeed, Tamara's claim that Titus practices "irreligious piety" in sacrificing her son guides the mood of the scene in an ill-fitting solemnity, a sense of religious pomp accompanying a human sacrifice. In other words, violence becomes a leveling technique: both sides approach and acknowledge killing from a similar, obligatory ground.

Indeed, the production approaches violence with a matter-of-fact attitude

through much of the action. Just as the Romans approach the sacrifice of Alarbus with an air of inevitability, Tamara and her sons subsequently kill Bassianus (Mike Dowling) in a straightforward manner, with no hesitancies or qualms: the brothers capture and stab Bassianus without any frills. Despite accusing Titus of performing "irreligious piety," and blinding accepting violence condoned by his society, Kohler's Tamara subscribes to a similar view; Tamara sees only violence as the answer to violence, so Bassianus must die as part of Tamara's revenge plot against Titus. Thus, even as she reproaches Titus for senseless killing, Tamara herself appears blind to any peaceful solutions; she feels compelled to answer bloody blow for bloody blow.

Additionally, other scenes evoke the stoic attitude towards violence, approaching bloody deeds with a resigned acceptance. While not staged, the rape of Lavinia (Sonia Ritter) carries a similarly somber tone as earlier instances of violence (*Titus Andronicus* 2.3). Tamara claims the last words as the brothers remove Lavinia from stage with clear intention, but the scene holds no glee; the brothers move with purposeful actions, attacking Lavinia in the same manner they dispatch her husband. Just like their mother, Chiron and Demetrius seem to go through the motions without any real personal conviction, imitating the acts of revenge as expected not necessarily desired. Even though both brothers originally desired to "love" Lavinia, the production uses the rape scene to cast Chiron and Demetrius merely as instruments of Tamara's revenge, as tools she employs to destroy Titus. Thus, the brothers appear as dependent on and easily swayed by Tamara, which aligns with the later scenes, especially Tamara's "I am Revenge" scene (*Titus Andronicus* 5.2.30).

Marcus (Donald Sumpter) highlights the Roman-ness of viewing violence with solemnity and acceptance. The production retains the brunt of Marcus' speech following his discovery of the mutilated Lavinia (*Titus Andronicus* 2.4.11-57). As she remains bloody and helpless onstage, Marcus speaks of Roman mythic history, including four allusions to the myth of Philomela, a Greek princess raped by her brother-in-law before having her tongue cut out.[11] Marcus emphasizes that Lavinia's terrible situation fits well within the backdrop of Rome's violent founding. Rather than appearing as a concerned uncle, outraged at Lavinia's abuse, Marcus seems almost unperturbed by the events as he tidily places Lavinia's rape within a larger mythic context. As Marcus calmly dwells on Lavinia's injuries, his words latch not onto Lavinia as a person, but Lavinia as a Roman paradigm of a fallen woman.

Similarly, Titus' speech about Rome as a "wilderness of tigers" holds an equivalent gravity to his brother's tone (*Titus Andronicus* 3.1.53). Titus speaks the phrase with a conviction that indicates he does view Rome as ravenous, but he also tacks the words onto the rest of his speech. So, Titus almost offhandedly acknowledges the cannibalism of Rome, but places no real weight onto the words. Rather, the line simply contributes to the litany of complaints and observances that Titus makes about Rome. In this way, Titus views nothing unusual about his words; he recognizes the cannibalism of his society but it fails to surprise him. The production uses Marcus and Titus to underscore the commonplace nature of violence within Rome. Where Marcus underlines myth, Titus focuses on reality and his own experiences with Rome as predatory. Thus, Cox's Titus indicates a resigned,

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[11] See book VI of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.

but not necessarily negative, understanding of the cannibalistic nature of Rome.

The scenes leading up to and encompassing the demise of Chiron and Demetrius alter the tone of violence in comparison to the production's previously somber but accepted portrayal on bloodshed. During the "I am Revenge" scene, Cox's Titus plays along with Tamara's plans, jokingly wresting the brothers away from her under the pretense of his supposed madness. Titus maintains a light tone after Tamara leaves, tying sheets around the necks of both brothers and dancing around the stage. The production uses mimetic violence, but Titus' body blocks the audience's view of the killing of Chiron and Demetrius and attendants quickly remove the bodies from the stage. Titus both readily turns to violence for revenge, but his newfound lighthearted attitude alters the tone of violence in the 1987 production. In other words, the focus of the scene strays towards Titus' strange, airy attitude rather than fixating on the actual violence; Cox's Titus quickly and efficiently kills the brothers without much fanfare, but his mood remains almost gleeful. The murders of the Goth brothers stay inline with the production's characterization of violence as commonplace. Thus, Titus approaches killing with the same mindset as when he killed Alarbus and as Tamara did when she condoned violence against Lavinia; so violence remains commonplace, but Titus begins to view violence less with the air of necessity and more with pleasure.

Titus maintains his gleeful excitement through the final scene. The house of Andronicus pairs cheerful whistling while preparing for the banquet, which reinforces the switch from obligatory action towards desired action. Dressed as a chef complete with a white hat, Titus continues with his frenzied excitement. The

blocking of the scene places all the characters on the far side of a table, facing the audience. In this way, the production focuses on the truly theatrical nature of the scene, creating an exaggerated tableau for the benefit of the audience. So, does Cox's Titus play at insanity for the benefit of Tamara or does he take real pleasure in tricking Tamara into eating her sons? When asked about Chiron and Demetrius, Titus calmly remarks that "Why, they are both, baked in that pie" (*Titus Andronicus* 5.3.59). Cox passes the remark in a matter-of-fact manner, no longer decidedly elated in the horror of violence, but almost exhausted with the situation, and his pronouncement draws laughter from the audience. In other words, when Cox's Titus begins to find enjoyment in vengeance, he also begins to step away from the blind acceptance of violence in general within his Roman world; once the cycle of revenge comes full circle when Tamara eats the pie, violence neither remains necessary to Titus nor enjoyable. The production stays with Titus' newfound resignation as his own death comes quickly and quietly and the remaining murders follow with little emphasis. Thus, his own death seems to come from his exhaustion with Rome and its beliefs in violence; he breaks away from rote violence in striving to avenge his family and, in the process, loses the taste for violence at all.

The 1987 production becomes a study in the meaning of violence within the Roman world of *Titus Andronicus*. Although accent and blocking superficially demarcate the different sides of Goth from Roman, the Swan *Titus* uses acts of bloodshed to equalize the sides and, thus, comment on the meaning of violence. The Romans perform the human sacrifice of Alarbus with diligence and order, which colors murder as both commonplace and necessary; the Romans feel obliged to

carry out a sacrifice to honor their gods. Likewise, the murder of Bassianus and the rape of Lavinia occur with sense of inevitable: the Goths feel obligated to react to the killing of Alarbus with equally heinous deeds. However, when Titus takes matters into his own hands (or rather hand), revenge becomes less a familial duty and more a pleasurable deed. While he killed Alarbus for the sake of family honor, when he kills Chiron and Demetrius for the same reason, Cox's Titus seems a changed man, embracing revenge as satisfying. So, even though he dispatches the brothers quickly and coolly, his mood seems ebullient: he anticipates the final machinations of his plan with joviality. In this way, the production focuses on violence as a tool; violence can serve the honor of the family while also brining delight to the perpetrator. Hence, the 1987 production indicates that bloodshed, rather than separating the Goth from the Roman, the barbaric from the civilized, becomes a equalizing component, a desire and tool inherent to humanity.

***Titus Andronicus*, 2003, theatre (Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Bill Alexander)**

The 2003 Royal Shakespeare Theatre's production of Titus Andronicus uses an earnest approach to the play text, presenting the play as a true tragedy. Rather than finding humor in the excessive violence of the drama as other productions, the 2003 adaptation approaches killing with a stoic resolve that never strays into the farcical like the 1987 production. The 2003 *Titus* dances between an uncomfortable emphasis on bloodshed while stepping away from some of the more graphic possibilities. Thus, even as the set puts action above words, the treatment of violence seemingly inverts this dynamic, using words to amplify the meaning of

physical injuries only vaguely shown on stage. Ultimately the production uses the violence to showcase the psychological backdrop of *Titus Andronicus*.

Although the design uses only minimal props, the staging and backdrop of the production comment on the Rome of *Titus* and the nature of the characters. Most prominent, a wooden, round and movable platform covers the normally rectangular thrust structure. The circular stage serves a practical purpose in allowing action to fluidly transition between scenes with actors entering and exiting with the assistance of the moving platform. However, the action of the stage also lends a frantic energy to the production, forcing an almost ceaseless movement to the world of *Titus*. Furthermore, the circular form itself, combined with the spinning motion, alludes to circularity within the action of the play: the perpetual cycle of revenge and death. A mask, or sculptural face larger than a human forms the second prominent component of the set. Initially obscured with a black scrim during the interchange between Bassianus (Fergus O'Donnell) and Saturninus (John Lloyd Fillingham), the mask sits nestled into center upstage, an androgynous human face with hollowed eyes and a set mouth. The design seems classical: a warm pale gray, the mask seems formed of a material meant to represent either marble or plaster, which would suggest either Roman sculpture or Roman dramatic masks. Considering the vacuous eyes, the design suggests the latter, with the mask becoming a nod to the Roman dramatic tradition as well as representing a silent and passive surveyor of the action. Yet, in this way, the masks appears contradictory, both alluding to Ancient theatre, but, by leaving the mouth closed and only the eyes open, dismantling the power of speech or song, which formed a critical component

in Roman theatre: even as the mask references the Roman theatrical tradition, it removes a critical component.[12] Just as the circular stage focuses on the importance of action, the mask seems to suggest a similar idea about action trumping words in this Roman world.

Costume additionally becomes an evocative, but understated, visual component of the world of *Titus Andronicus*. As with many productions of *Coriolanus*, red and blue costuming distinguishes opposing sides in the 2003 *Titus*. However, in *Titus*, the opposing sides form the factions of Bassianus and Saturninus; the brothers enter with a flourish, the followers of Saturninus holding red banners aloft that match the red sash of their leader just as the supporters of Bassianus carry blue banners that match his sash (*Titus Andronicus* 1.1). Thus, from the opening scene, the adaptation focuses on displaying the political unrest among the Romans, showing that Rome wars not just against the Goths but against itself. Unlike the vibrant factionalism of the emperor's sons, Titus and his soldiers enter in black, utilitarian military uniforms, with capes as the only dramatic flair to their outfits. The Goth prisoners dragged onstage wear tattered, basic tunics and pants, but in similarly somber dark tones to that of the Roman army. In this manner, the production compares the Goths to the Romans, both militaristic, but where the Goths don well worn and unelaborate costumes, the Roman soldiers strut about in functional but orderly attire; where the Goths appear "barbaric" in hodgepodge outfits, the Romans appear "civilized" in uniforms. Yet, in another sense, both

[12] Gregory McCart discusses the physicality and importance of masks in his article, "Masks in Greek and Roman Theatre." Additionally, in "Festivals and audiences in Athens and Rome," Rush Rehm discusses the mask tradition in Roman pantomime, which used them especially for "sensual and often lascivious portrayals of mythical figures" (Rehm 194).

groups seem literally cut from the same dark cloth. The production subtly separates the Goth from the Roman in clothing style, but also shows an apparent similarity between the two groups. Furthermore, when Chiron (Daniel Brocklebank) and Demetrius (Martin Hutson) join Saturninus' faction, they don red sashes identical to his, a visual that shows both their assimilation to Roman politics as well as focusing on how Rome itself remains a divided entity. The production uses costume as a prominent visual cue to connect and separate groups of power within *Titus Andronicus*. Especially with the clear distinction between Bassianus and Saturninus, the first scene of the 2003 production shows a Rome divided, a Rome destroying itself from within: a foreshadowing of the spiral of destruction that culminates in the banquet scene.

The production approaches violence with a series of mixed designs, from gory and mimetic to stylized and understated. Although Alarbus (Rob Wynn) dies offstage, attendants return with two bowls filled and dripping with blood, which alludes to the act of sacrifice, without demonstrating it. In the same way, two caskets of Titus' sons ascend past the large mask after the sacrifice of Alarbus, an action that references a completed act of violence, without needing to show it. So, the first scene with Titus (David Bradley) surrounds him with bloodshed; the production immediately associates Titus with violence but in an indirect manner. Unlike the 1987 production, the 2003 adaptation begins the killing scene of Bassianus with Chiron and Demetrius pretending to jest, pretending to pretend about their violent intent. The brothers recognize Tamara's (Maureen Beattie) lies as she feigns fear at the sight of Bassianus and Lavinia (Eve Myles), but they play along for the benefit of

the couple. However, Chiron and Demetrius quickly dispense with levity and the scene takes a serious turn following Tamara's "honey" speech, which she punctuates by kissing Chiron, who then becomes animalistic, crouching on the ground and watching with a predatory intensity (*Titus Andronicus* 2.3.131-132). Thus, as the first references to bloodshed remain only implied, by the killing of Bassianus, violence becomes visceral, no longer removed from the characters, but an integral part of them. Yet, when Lavinia stumbles back onto stage following the rape, her pale dress shows only faint stains of blood from her stumps and the production avoids having blood pour from her mouth during the "crimson river" line (*Titus Andronicus* 2.4.22).[13] So even as the production amplifies stage violence, it also shies away from opportunities for showing graphic gore. However, the production doubles back again as it keeps the entirety of Marcus' (Ian Gelder) speech, which he deliver solemnly and severely to a crumpled Lavinia. The production visually understates Lavinia's missing hands and abused person, but, at the same time, uses Marcus' lines to blatantly emphasize her injuries.

The seizure of Chiron and Demetrius and the following banquet scene also plays with the combination of graphically violent acts and emotional detachment. When Titus manages to secure the Goth brothers, he coolly gestures a knife at each one as he speaks of "this banquet." Bradley's Titus, like in other productions, approaches the killings of the brothers with a withdrawn air, a resolve that fails to resonate within his emotions. His aloofness carries into the actual killing of Chiron and Demetrius, performed onstage, with the brothers kneeling and facing

[13] In the other stage productions and in Taymor's film, Lavinia accompanies the line by letting blood pour or dribble out of her mouth.

the audience. The blocking uses Lavinia to obscure the actual act as she collects the blood. The kneeling position of Chiron and Demetrius and the collection of blood reinforce an idea of the brothers as sacrificial victims. In this way, their deaths echo the earlier murder of Alarbus, with Titus performing the duty with the same detached, "irreligious piety." To an extent, the blocking makes the deaths of the brothers more metaphorical sacrifices than physical ones; even as Titus slits their throats facing the audience, Lavinia's position prevents the production from showing a truly graphic display. Furthermore, the preparation of the banquet features solemn harp music that accompanies the household as they set the table.

Likewise, the banquet itself plays with the normalness of violence, testing the limits of the emotional detachment of the characters. The only one eating, Tamara devours her piece of pie using only her hands in an animalistic manner. She appears less like a Roman empress and more like a predator; the manner of Beattie's Tamara during the banquet scene seems to complete Lavinia's earlier metaphors when she refers to the Queen of Goths as "tiger," "raven," and "lion" (*Titus Andronicus* 2.3.142-151). Considering Titus' assessment of Rome as a "wilderness of tigers," the final scene places Tamara into that role literally, transforming her into one of the urban predators that both Titus and Lavinia foreshadow.

The production likewise uses the murder of Lavinia to circle back to earlier concepts about Rome. Titus calmly asks Saturninus: "Was it well done of rash Virginius/ To slay his daughter with his own right hand" after "she was enforced" (*Titus Andronicus* 5.3.38). Fillingham's Saturninus readily confirms the justice of

Virginius' cause, to which Titus responds with action: he, just as placidly, breaks Lavinia's neck, as both actors face the audience, with an audible snap the only element disrupting the eerie calm. The evolution of the scene shocks Saturninus, allowing the production to demonstrate the discrepancy in Titus between adhering to the principles of Roman mythological history and maintaining a functioning society. Despite readily accepting Virginius' actions, Saturninus baulks at the murder of Lavinia: able to accept the idea of Roman mythology, but unable to stomach the physical act. Additionally, the death of Lavinia recalls lines from Aaron when he refers to her as "Lucrece," and from Marcus when he calls her "Philomel" (*Titus Andronicus* 4.1.90, 2.4.11-57). As Tamara physically becomes the tiger that Lavinia and Titus use as a metaphor, in Act 5 Lavinia becomes the paradigm of the raped Roman woman, deflowered and now killed as the myths before her.

By straddling the division between myth and reality in *Titus Andronicus*, the adaptation mirrors the text. As the text explores Roman mythology in a literal sense, the production manipulates the instances of gruesomely enacted myth (the murders, the rape) by inflecting a commentary on the humanity behind the actions. In other words, as the actors remain unfazed through many of the violent scenes, the adaptation highlights how the Rome of *Titus* represents a society saturated by bloodshed and, therefore, violence simply represents just another benign component of the culture. However, the outburst from Saturninus serves as a jolting reminder: *Titus Andronicus* shows a "real" world, not a mythic one, and even characters in a world overwhelmed with bloodshed can only accept so much violence. The final scene dives into the boundaries between myth and reality,

language and action; when Saturninus breaks the stoic attitude that earlier scenes of the production stick with, he exposes the human limit for violence, the limit where real life can no longer emulate mythic life.

Titus Andronicus, 2014, theatre (Shakespeare's Globe Theatre, Lucy Bailey)

The Globe Theatre's 2014 *Titus Andronicus* invokes dichotomies and contradictions in costume and tone. Costume serves to distinguish the Roman and Gothic sides as well as divide Rome from Titus (William Houston) himself. As with other productions, the 2014 Titus uses only a minimal set design that relies on only a few props. However, the props that the adaptation utilizes focus on the violence within the drama: weapons aid and illustrate the bloody dialogue and stage directions. Ultimately, the production straddles the line between tragic and comic with its approach to violence.

The costume focuses on a traditionally classical design with an emphasis on visually separating the Goths and the Romans during the opening scene. Purples, blacks, and reds dominate the color scheme; color dictates status and alliance in the adaptation. The production uses purple for the imperial shade, decking out the classical tunics of Saturninus (Matthew Needham) and Bassianus (Steffan Donnelly) in a rich eggplant with gold detailing. Upon his coronation, Saturninus also receives a gold laurel wreath, emphasizing both his status as well as the classical elements of the production. Titus enters in the guise of the Roman soldier with medieval twists: rather than leather, Titus wears a chainmail hauberk slashed like a Roman skirt, and his protruding shoulder pauldrons could belong to a suit of armor. Titus' red plumed

helmet represents the one truly classical design of his armor as well as the one area of bright color in his otherwise muted metallics and blacks.

How the production alters character costume additionally dictates the dynamics of the Roman society. Purple colors the garments that the Goths change into when Tamara (Indira Varma) becomes empress; although, the prisoners enter in ragged, dirty brown plaid prints, underlining a tribal element of the Goths, with the men topless or wearing sashes to showcase extensive blue tattooing across their chests. Thus, even as the brothers assume Roman regalia and colors, the tattoos remain and serve as a final reminder of their Gothic heritage during their death scene. Lavinia's ensemble also undergoes critical changes throughout the action; she enters in a floor-length, neutral dress, but the rape scene extensively stains her garments, leaving her onstage covered in red for an extended time (*Titus Andronicus* 2.4). When Lavinia reemerges in the house of the Andronicii, an off-white cloth ensemble covers her head to toe, including a cowl over her hair and neck and bandage-like wrappings around her mutilated wrists. The purple of Saturninus and Bassianus reflects their imperial status while the purple of the Goths reflects their cultural assimilation into Roman society. Furthermore, Titus in black and red seems at once Roman and also distanced from Rome; rather than the opulence of the city, he enters with an austerity more soldier than specifically Roman. As Titus seems distanced in black, Lavinia's evolved outfit also separates her from the Roman culture, with her swathed clothing representing both bandages while also serving as a reminder of her lost virtue.

A mostly minimalistic set, the few props that the production utilizes

incorporate the audience into the action and emphasize the violence. Black paint covers the normally bright columns and backdrop of the Globe, with the stage itself stained with blood from past productions. Furthermore, black banners extending across the roof block out much of the natural light, and use of smoke heightens the obfuscated visibility. Ultimately the design creates a claustrophobic setting, which the actors further reestablish through audience interaction. The drama opens with Saturninus and Bassianus raised upon platforms in the middle of the groundlings and attendants wheel them towards the stage, and, when Saturninus appeals to Rome, he gestures to the audience that surrounds him (*Titus Andronicus* 1.1). Unlike other productions, Titus stabs Alarbus (Nicholas Karimi) onstage and fills a bowl with his blood.[14] Thus, the bowl and the knife add to the sense of sacrifice during the scene; where other productions haul Alarbus offstage and return with a bowl of blood, the 2014 Globe adaptation pointedly focuses on the act of the sacrifice itself and the implements used. Likewise, Bassianus dies onstage, with Chiron and Demetrius using a net to trap him and swing his body onstage before dragging him off and using the net on Lavinia (*Titus Andronicus* 2.3.187). Although the rape takes place offstage, Lavinia returns in her newly dyed gown still struggling with net, which connects her state of disarray to the actions (of rape and mutilation) implied but not enacted onstage.

As the violence continues through the drama, the production also continues to use props as a means of bolstering the violence. Aaron (Obi Abili) kills the nurse (Bryonie Pritchard) in a sexualized manner using a long sword with both actors on

[14] Stage directions for the scene only mention: "*Exeunt Titus' sons with* ALARBUS," and "*Enter the sons of Andronicus, again, with bloody swords*." See 1.1.127-142.

their hands and knees facing the audience with Aaron behind; her death invokes both the violence of killing as well as the violence of rape (*Titus Andronicus* 4.2.145). The killing of the nurse allows the production to use both Aaron and the sword to show not just a murder but also a graphically sexual murder done for the benefit of the audience and meant to shock. Similar to Aaron, Titus carries out the killing of Chiron and Demetrius with dramatic flair that recalls the sacrifice of Alarbus. At Titus' order to "bind them," attendants wrench the Roman tunics off the brothers before tying their hands and attaching their feet to a horizontal wooden beam. The result leaves the brothers struggling helplessly upside-down, facing the audience, with their navy tattoos prominently displayed, uncovering their Goth roots. The audience can view the entire spectacle as Titus meticulously slices the throat of each brother with Lavinia holding a bowl to collect their blood in a sacrificial manner. Unlike other productions that obscure any graphic violence during the scene, the blocking of Chiron and Demetrius, Titus and Lavinia, creates a clear spectacle, a tableaux meant to arrest viewers just like the killing of the nurse. Violence in the Globe production pushes the limits of the dramatic into the melodramatic, extending the murders contained within the play into visually thrilling and garish spectacles. To an extent, by rendering the violent scenes into dramatic spectacles, the production paradoxically displaces some of the shock of the bloodshed; the overblown approach to murder and mutilation, that often incorporates blocking that places the actors facing the audience, reiterates its position as theatre.

Furthermore, despite emphasizing the bloodshed through graphic, mimetic staging, the 2014 production also emphasizes a humorous undertone within the

text, and contributing to the ironic understatement of violence. After bringing Lavinia back onstage, Chiron and Demetrius rattle banter back and forth with levity, laughing at the line that Lavinia has “no tongue to call” for help (*Titus Andronicus* 2.4.7). Likewise, as the Andronicii fight over who will send a severed hand to Saturninus, Lavinia lays forgotten upstage center, twitching, where she remains until Titus cuts off his hand; as the men bicker in a ridiculous testament to their attempts to uphold their frail honor by acting the man, Lavinia, already handless, almost comically shakes in front of the audience. Thus, the picture provides both the ridiculous arguing men as well as Lavinia who serves as physical reminder of actual loss of limbs. The production mingles both uncomfortable demonstrations of violence with mimetic stage techniques as well as highlighting the truly theatrical nature of the violence; bloodshed appears at once shockingly visceral and obviously fictitious.

The final scene continues to test the boundary where violence transforms from serious to comical. Like the other productions, Titus dons a white chef outfit and he eagerly anticipates the moment of revelation. Throughout the scene, he prances about the stage, wild-eyed, playing his part of assumed insanity, which Tamara and Saturninus easily believe. The characters all sit at a long wooden table, and, just as other productions, they all sit facing the audience. After Saturninus and Tamara sit, Titus hovers eagerly by Tamara’s place, eagerly anticipating the progression of his cruel joke with the pies; peering over Tamara’s shoulder, Titus excitedly watches her eat. The murder of Lavinia alters Titus’ light tone, as father and daughter embrace, but, rather than releasing her, Titus smothers her. A longer death than

other productions, the death of Lavinia garners the attention of Saturninus and Tamara, who both stand back from the table, appalled. Then the humor returns to the scene as laughter underlines Houston's Titus words when he informs the table that he baked Chiron and Demetrius into the pie "whereof their mother daintily hath fed" (*Titus Andronicus* 5.3.60). The remaining deaths occur with lackluster execution: Titus stabs Tamara and then opens his arms to literally embrace Saturninus' blade, Saturninus puts up little resistance against his own assailants before falling himself.

The Globe *Titus* approaches the play from an angle that literalizes the text. As the design maintains the classical setting of the drama, the actors also treat the text in a literal manner. Most notably, the mimetic treatment of the graphic stage directions exposes the unadulterated violence within the text. The graphic approach illustrates characters and society as unfazed by bloodshed. However, the 2014 adaptation also balances the visceral scenes of violence with scenes meant to draw audience laughter. Although Titus shows a comic side to violence in the last acts of the play with his gleeful antics and light tone, the drama and violence ends as it begins; after the initial shock of cannibalism, the characters appear apathetic about death and bloodshed. Thus, the disparate combination of violence and comedy works in tandem to show how the characters within this Rome view the widespread death with indifference.

***Titus Andronicus*, 2015, theatre (Robinson College Cambridge, Dr. Simon Bell)**

Like other productions, the design of the 2015 *Titus Andronicus* centers on

gore and stage blood as a means of illustrating both character and society. Even for a production of *Titus Andronicus*, the Cambridge *Titus* extends the boundaries of gore and violence, exploring how blood and laughter act and react to each other. Violence serves as a tool to comment on the Roman world as laudatory of bloodshed while ignorant of pain. Furthermore, the costume design breaks from the typically classical wardrobe that other adaptations favor, but the design still remains within Roman boundaries.

Departing from the use of costume color to distinguish characters and sides, the Cambridge adaptation approaches costume and color from a thematic angle. The overall design achieves a gritty, modern aesthetic with the Roman politicians: Saturninus (Scott Loader), Bassianus (Harry Anton), and Marcus (Lawrence Ward) begin the action wearing formal suit coats and high riding boots with no shirts. Additionally, like the Goths, tattoos adorn the faces of the Roman men, black ink to the Goth's blue. Red features prominently into the design from the crimson sashes of the Roman men to the crimson of Tamora's dress (Kate Hunter). Titus (James Law) and the Roman soldiers appear as the only characters in military costume; they strut onto the stage with chest plates like classical Roman officers and helmets with front-facing melt plumes that recall Julie Taymor's 1999 film, *Titus*. Even though the costume sets the Romans apart from the Goths, the separation in remains minimal, casting the groups as variations of each other, or sides of the same coin.

The production amplifies the violence, graphically staging the scenes of bloodshed. Before the action commences, a skeleton sits onstage covered in cheap jewelry on a platform with golden drapery. A large silver bowl sits at the feet of the

skeleton, at the ready for the killing of Alarbus (Michael Patrick). The production uses the dais of death as a type of altar during the sacrifice of Alarbus , with the Roman soldiers bowing before the platform, their backs to the audience shortly after coming onstage. Thus, even before verbally discussing a human sacrifice, the production sets up the Romans of *Titus* as supplicating a god of death. Alarbus dies offstage, but the sons of Titus reenter the scene with entrails dripping from their hands, a more graphic reminder of sacrifice than merely the bowl would suggest. The gory interpretation of the play continues during the joint murder-rape scene of Bassianus and Lavinia (Amanda Madison). Where other productions efficiently stab Bassianus somewhere in the chest, Chiron (Adam Boyle) and Demetrius (Michael Patrick) finish the job with a forceful stab from behind, evocative of rape in much the same way as Aaron kills the nurse in the 2014 Globe production, and a technique which the Cambridge production later repeats with the murder of the nurse (Emma Grier).

While the production does not stage the rape of Lavinia, she returns to the stage slumped and topless, facing away from the audience her previously white dress torn and covered in crimson. As the brothers continue their banter about her missing limbs and tongue, their words carry more malice than the deadpan delivery of earlier productions (most notably the 1987 Swan). Additionally, in a design choice that echoes Taymor's film, when Lavinia absently waves an arm, she reveals a row of twigs where her hands once were, thus literalizing the idea of "stumps." From menace to malice, throughout Lavinia's extended suffering and the Goth brothers continued tormenting, Chiron holds and waves around Lavinia's severed tongue. In

case the prop tongue remained too subtle for the audience, the adaptation, like most others, included a stream of gratuitous stage blood pouring from Lavinia's mouth when Marcus talks of a "crimson river." Although the production cut the majority of lines, Marcus' speech additionally contributes to the frightful spectacle as he mechanically proceeds through the words, a robotic counterpoint to Lavinia's quiet, shaking sobs. As a final touch, the production keeps Lavinia in her mangled dress even after intermission, a tattered, bloody reminder of her sexual assault and a testament to the lasting impact of her rape in physically and emotionally devastating her.

The final violent acts fixate on a male ideal of honor and remain sexualized. In the beginning of Act 3, Lavinia appears in great pain, but Law's Titus seems either unmoved or ignorant of her plight, delivering his lines with a booming voice of entitlement, bemoaning his own situation not hers as he cries that "he that wounded her/ Hath hurt me more" (*Titus Andronicus* 3.1.91-92). Later, like the Globe production, Lavinia appears at the front of the stage while the men of her family argue about whose hand to send to the emperor; the debate seems serious, a verbal battle for the honor of losing a hand, rather than a ludicrous interchange about who should willingly lose a hand. The actual hand removal takes place onstage, with a cleverly placed prop hand allowing Titus to slowly saw at his limb and draw out the moment, a design decision which emphasizes both Titus' disregard for pain as well as his obstinate choice to sacrifice his limb. Through Titus, the production focuses on an apathy towards physical and emotional pain; this Rome places honor for the family above safety and comfort.

The final scenes become a series of comedic and violent metaphors that evoke both classical theatre and classical sacrifice. During the "I am Revenge" scene, Chiron and Demetrius don matching pink thongs adorned with a wood stump over their genitals, devil horns, pink boas, and pink pig noses. The costuming casts the brothers in animalistic roles that nod to the Greek and Roman satyr tradition while gently foreshadowing the feature role that Chiron and Demetrius play in the final banquet. [15] Additionally, Titus kills them on the platform where the skeleton had been; both brothers lie on their backs, their hands hanging off the platform and exposing their necks, which allows for a bloody spectacle in full view of the audience as Titus slits each throat in turn. Costuming of the banquet scene becomes both comedic, with the direction "TITUS dressed like a cook" interpreted as Titus wearing only an apron and a red clown nose; and morbid, with Lavinia wearing paint, which transforms her face into a skull. The skeleton imagery continues when Titus, after the line "daintily hath fed," pulls a skeletal arm from the oversized and dripping pie, which contributes a humorous element to a horrifying scene. Titus kills Lavinia in a stylized strangulation; Tamara dies much like her sons, stuck by Titus in the neck like a pig; the final deaths end with simple stabbings, resulting in a stage littered with blood and bodies. The final scenes play with human sacrifice and add humor to the terrifyingly graphic violence, while returning the beginning of the performance and the idea of supplicating death.

The 2015 Titus makes Rome seem at once ambivalent to human life and

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[15] Mark Griffith notes in "'Telling the tale': a performing tradition from Homer to pantomime" that Greek satyr costumes often featured animalistic traits (tails, furry robes) with an erect phallus attached to tights.

greedy for it as characters pray to skeletons and deify death. The Romans literally bow before mortality, but seem to disregard its fragility as Lavinia's comfort comes second to male valor, and sanctity of life behind the honor of family. Sexualized violence contributes an additional element of horror to the murders of Bassianus and the nurse while echoing the rape of Lavinia and commenting on sexual assault as not just violation, but violence.

***Titus*, 1999, film (Julie Taymor)**

In Julie Taymor's *Titus*, Rome appears as the epitome of the Eternal City through a design that blends time and politics. Costuming mixes elements of Roman history, notably the military uniforms that combine 5th century armor with elements of 1930s fascism. Likewise, Taymor utilizes contemporary Rome as the main backdrop, incorporating shots that range from the Empire (the Coliseum) through the 20th century (Mussolini's Palazzo della Civilita). *Titus* provides an image of not just a Rome, but a visual snapshot of every Rome. Taymor's 1999 *Titus* uses camera angle, editing, and visual motif to investigate circularity as related to Rome. The visual and auditory design of *Titus* explores political versus personal and how those identities relate to Rome.

Taymor opens with a spectacle before delving into Shakespeare's text. The first shot shows an extreme close-up of a pair of blue eyes with lights flickering on and off, throwing the shot in and out of illumination. As the shot moves outward, the camera reveals that the eyes belong to a young boy in a black shirt, black pants, and black combat boots, his face mostly obscured by a paper bag in the form of a makeshift mask. Stylistically, the bag evokes a Roman helmet, a parallel Taymor

later reinforces with the first shot of Titus (Anthony Hopkins): a medium two-shot of his helmeted face with his features obfuscated by a dust blue helmet and matching mud. He sits on a red chair at a crimson midcentury table covered with food debris, as he smashes toy soldiers into cakes and covers the chaotic mess with a veneer of ketchup like a sticky, edible blood. Throughout the violent play sequence, the camera sloshes from side to side, amplifying the sense of disorder in the scene with its movement; the camera serves to further animate the scene, transforming the toy soldiers smeared in food into amalgams of real soldiers smeared in blood. The mise-en-scene focuses on vibrant reds that the camera brings to life with motion, evoking violence, bringing war to a domestic scene.

Taymor further establishes the violent mood of the opening with sound and lighting. Although not shown, the flickering lights accompanied by violent and distant noise seems to emanate from a television, with the boy facing and watching an area out of the frame; the boy seems to interact and imitate something on a screen, something fictional that he brings to life. Thus, as the boy plays with the food and soldiers, the television seems to both amplify his actions as well as fuelling them. In this manner, the scene dabbles with where fictional ends and real begins. The transitional shots towards the end of the scene additionally rely on the chaos to outline how Taymor juxtaposes domestic life with battle life as the scene transitions from pretend to real life. As the cacophony of the boy's play mingles with that from the television, the scene cuts to a low angle shot underneath the kitchen table, with a clear view of a darkened window to upper screen left. Off-screen noises of explosions replace the boy's play as he crouches under the table, hands protecting

his ears from the escalating sound. The window explodes in a fiery display, breaching the liminal division between fictional war and real war. An anonymous soldier in contemporary combat gear removes the boy from the kitchen, with a tracking shot following the pair down a dark stairwell and into a gloomy and expansive coliseum. In this way, as Taymor commences the first scene with a sequence that blurs the lines between real and pretend, she exposes a world fixated on war, comparing the similarities between a child's violent play and the gory reality of battle before removing that fine line to reveal a Rome not just fixated with war but engrossed with it, a Rome with its identity rooted in violence.

As the opening scene underlines the violence of Titus' Rome, it additionally reiterates the omnipresence of violence as a part of heritage and Roman identity. The following scene reveals the boy as Young Lucius, but the opening scene uses a degree of anonymity, obscuring his identity with the paper bag and the jostling motion of the camera. Thus, Young Lucius could be any young boy playing at war before having real war rip him away from his home and his childhood. The opening sequence establishes violence as ingrate to Roman society, and Taymor's emphasis on Young Lucius as emblematic of youth and childhood underlines the connection between Roman society and war. Furthermore, the use of food during the opening shots outlines a cannibalistic tone. Hence, the first scene can serve as a foreshadowing to the banquet scene; just as first sequence dances between real and pretend, the two scenes in conjunction mimic that relationship, with the first scene standing as the pretend to the last.

Additionally, visually characterized by a succession of quick camera cuts, the scene of Alarbus' (Raz Degnan) sacrifice amplifies the emotion of the scene in contrast to the stoic Roman characters. An extreme low-angle shot opens the procession to the Andronicus family tomb with Titus flanked by metal banners on either side, the lighting dominated by his long shadow going across to scree right. The shot underlines the somber mood of the scene by emphasizing the underground location of the tomb. After a series of shots establish the gloomy catacombs lighted only by an altar fire, the scene fixates on the ritualistic nature of the sacrifice. Dragged in from screen right, the Goths, bedecked in grimy animal furs create a visual point of contrast to the stark and clean blacks and reds of the Roman soldiers. The visual disparity echoes the contention between the two sides and mimics the characterization of each: the Goths as emotional and the Romans as clinically orderly.

The subsequent framing and editing reinforce the two sides and establish Titus and Tamara (Jessica Lange) as opposites. While Titus and Tamara argue, a master shot puts Young Lucius, Lucius, and Titus in the foreground, each heating a pair of swords over the altar fire; guards striping and preparing Alarbus to meet his end occupy the middle ground; and a kneeling Tamara flanked by Aaron and more guards command the background. As the low-key, high contrast lighting emphasizes the foreground and middle ground, Taymor creates a complex mise-en-scene that lays bare the dynamic of the scene; the cool precision of Titus separated from Tamara's grief by the spectacle of Alarabus. Soldiers remove Alarbus off-screen for the sacrifice and a high angle medium close-up of Tamara's face shows her stricken

with emotion, as she screams at Titus and his "irreligious piety." The next shot further juxtaposes the pair and shows a low-angle medium close-up of Titus, his features impassive in the face of Tamara's grief. Taymor follows the cuts with to a medium shot of Lucius, returning with a bowl that prominently displays bloody entrails, the camera tracking him from the front that ends at the fire where Lucius dumps the entrails into the fire without flourish; the cut with Lucius serves to place the viewer in the scene, to see what each character sees. The tracking shot precedes a series of an eye-level medium and two shots of characters, cataloguing reactions to the sacrifice. Beginning with an unfazed Young Lucius, the final medium shot portrays Tamara through the flames of the altar, silently resigned to tears.[16] The sacrifice scene emphasizes an emotional distance between the Goths and the Romans, with Taymor using mise-en-scene and editing to juxtapose Titus and Tamara and showcase them as tropes: the soldier blindly following orders and the mother grieving and enraged at the death of a child. In this way, Taymor steps away from a strictly Roman versus Goth portrayal of Titus and Tamara in favor of turning them into symbols recognized across cultures.

Likewise, during the scene with Bassianus' murder, the camera and cutting establish the power dynamic between the Goths and Romans. Set in a clearing in a forest, the scene fixates on the intimidation tactics that Lavinia and Bassianus employ against Tamara before her sons arrive. Bassianus and Lavinia enter the

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[16] Taymor echoes the shot of Tamara with a later with a zooming close-up on Tamara, making eye contact with the camera as she announces that she will "find a day to massacre them all" (*Titus Andronicus* 1.1.447). The close-up then cuts to a profile two-shot of Titus and Tamara with a superimposed shot of fire and spinning body parts, thus recalling the earlier juxtaposition of Titus and Tamara.

scene in a deep depth of field long shot, approaching Tamara from behind, with Tamara in the left foreground and all three characters facing the camera. As Bassianus questions Tamara about her intentions, wondering what other than "foul desire" led her to a secluded place, the camera cuts to a medium close-up shot of Bassianus' face, which becomes a close-up as he walks towards the camera and towards Tamara with an expression of malice in his eyes. Taymor echoes the sequence with Lavinia's subsequent accusing lines; the two shots cast the couple as spiteful, seeking to hurt Tamara with the knowledge of her dalliance with Aaron.

Tamara takes the upper hand when Chiron and Demetrius come onto the scene, and the camera reflects her power. She tells her sons of the fabricated threats that Lavinia and Bassianus threw at her, recalling "a thousand fiends, a thousand hissing snakes/ Ten thousand swelling toads" (*Titus Andronicus* 2.3.100-101). The camera heightens the swell of Tamara's voice and her repetition, swooping down from an aerial shot and circling the forest clearing in an eye-level medium shot pan, echoing the circling walks of Tamara and the brothers as they crowd Lavinia and Bassianus. Furthermore, the shots cut quickly, the camera dropping one arced shot and picking up from a slightly altered angle to circle again, generating a claustrophobic mood. The actual killing of Bassianus punctuates the circling movement, with Demetrius and Bassianus in a long shot as the Goths briskly walks up and stabs quickly and efficiently into Bassianus' back and declaring that "This is a witness that I am thy son" (*Titus Andronicus* 2.3.115). The camera pivots to the side to show the approach of Chiron whose own stab into Bassianus pushes Demetrius out of frame. The camera reflects and amplifies the atmosphere of Bassianus' death

and portrays the incident as emotionally driven. Tamara appears purely motivated by her grief; she incites the violence against Bassianus and Lavinia for personal revenge not political gain against Rome. In this light, Tamara yet again appears as the foil to Titus, as she assumes his earlier role of power, prompting murder and rape because she sees no alternatives, just as Titus saw no alternative to sacrificing Alarbus.

In addition, the build-up to Lavinia's rape and the following discovery utilizes the camera to show the power differential between the characters. As Lavinia pleads with Demetrius, "do not learn her wrath," the pair framed in a two shot, both in profile, Lavinia kneels as Demetrius licks her hand, in a gesture reminiscent of a predator toying with its food (*Titus Andronicus* 2.3.143). The shot pans to a second two-shot with Lavinia pleadingly pulling at Chiron's arm, a symmetrical replication of the previous frame, with Chiron the reflection of Demetrius. Chiron throws her off when Lavinia prompts that a "mother breeds not all sons alike," to which he bitingly questions: "wouldst thou have me prove myself a bastard?" (*Titus Andronicus* 2.3.148). The movement pushes Lavinia out of the frame, the camera following her fall. In a way, Taymor sets up the series of shots to highlight the relationship of the brothers with the symmetrical framing and Chiron's vicious defensive outburst about his parentage. The brothers appear less than autonomous; they seem to represent copies of one another and remain solely dependent on Tamara, lesser extensions of her. In this way, the idea of rape appears as a tool that Tamara uses against Lavinia and against Titus; Chiron and Demetrius represent merely tools that Tamara wields for her own revenge. To further cement Tamara's power, a

subsequent eye-level medium shot shows a still kneeling Lavinia who holds the hem of Tamara's dress, face upturned in supplication; the scene cuts to a close-up of Tamara as she apathetically declares: "no, let them satisfy their lust on thee" (*Titus Andronicus* 2.3.180). The two shots establish the power Tamara holds over Lavinia and over the situation, the angle of the camera placing Tamara above Lavinia and aloof from her pleading; having failed to persuade the brothers away from the malicious intent, Lavinia turns to Tamara, and it is her say that finalizes the decision to rape Lavinia. Taymor uses the camera and editing to cast Chiron and Demetrius as completely under Tamara's sway, with Tamara controlling her sons just as she controls the scene. Taymor's filmic techniques reinforce the personal nature of the conflict driving Tamara; Taymor makes the narrative about personal vendetta not political rivalry.

Marcus' subsequent discovery of Lavinia reinforces the personal nature of the conflicts in *Titus*. Taymor substantially cuts the nearly 50-line speech of Marcus that Shakespeare's text includes; she retains the references to family and suffering, but excludes the mythic rape history. Beginning with a front tracking shot of Marcus walking through the woods, the sequence cuts to a long shot of Lavinia in a swamp-like plane. She stands, swaying, upon a low tree stump, her white dress bloodied and in tatters. The movement of the scene takes on a stylized manner as, in another shot, Lavinia turns towards Marcus (out of frame) and slowly swings her arms to reveal twigs attached to her wrists in place of her hands. Like theatrical productions, on Marcus' line "why dost not speak to me," Lavinia answers by opening her mouth to let blood pour out; the camera moves upwards and towards Lavinia, emphasizing

the blood in another stylized and slowed manner (*Titus Andronicus* 2.4.21). The scene then cuts to a close-up of Marcus' horrorstruck face, thus juxtaposing the stylized movement of Lavinia with the honest reaction of Marcus. Taymor tailors the scene to play stylized elements against authentic ones; Marcus represents the solid reality, horrified in the face of Lavinia's disfigurement, in the face of Lavinia's contrived role.

The scenes leading to and concluding the killings of Chiron and Demetrius feature a similar style of reality that balances the narrative between fact and fiction. In a long shot, the camera off kilter to the side, Titus sits in a bath, waving a piece of paper with writing in "bloody lines," his face illuminated by blue moonlight streaming from a window in center frame. The sequence cuts to a close-up of Titus as he looks out the window and rambles out loud to himself, until Tamara's speech, in a garbled voiceover, cuts into the scene. An extreme close-up of Tamara's eyes, as Tamara remarks that "Titus, I am come to talk with thee," her skin smeared with black makeup in a painted horizontal line, follows her disembodied voice (*Titus Andronicus* 5.2.16). A partial dissolve distorts Tamara's face, making her appear to have three eyes, thus amplifying the surrealist nature of the scene. The next part of the sequence features superimposed medium close-ups of Titus, one cut overlapping the next, as he shakes his head and tries to shake off Tamara's voice, as though it emanates from his head. In this way, the imagery complements the sound of the scene and becomes a type of perspective scene from Titus' point of view; Taymor blurs the lines of reality with the voiceover and the extreme close-ups of Tamara's eyes, distorting the truth of the narrative, as though experiencing the

sequence from Titus' disordered mind. Hence, as the scene commences, Taymor portrays Titus as mentally disturbed, with Tamara appearing as a figment of his tormented mind. Furthermore, Tamara and her sons reinforce the surrealist imagery of the scene; a shot shows them lined up outside Titus' house, Tamara in all black, a spiked crown on her head reminiscent of Roman solar crowns, while the brothers don animal hides, their faces painted in black and white geometric patterns. Just as the cutting and voiceover straddles real and imagined, the costumes of the Goths echo the confused state of Titus. In contrast, Titus himself emerges in a bathrobe.

The surrealist elements last only until Tamara's departure, ending the illusion of Titus' insanity and Titus' apparent madness continues through Tamara's introduction as "Revenge," but once Tamara walks off screen, Titus' previously manic behavior departs in favor of a cool exterior; he calmly orders his attendants to "bind them [Chiron and Demetrius]," demonstrating his orchestration of the scene, that he played at madness for his chance at revenge. Likewise, the editing of the scene reflects the sobering of the situation; eyelevel medium shots and close-ups replace the tilted camera angles and superimposed shots and tilted camera. A medium shot of Titus, till speaking calmly, as he tells Lavinia that "Thy foes are bound," becomes a two shot as Lavinia enters the scene from the left background, carrying a white basin. The following cut starts at the bound feet of Chiron and Demetrius, as they hang upside down and naked, and tracks down their bodies from behind, ending with Titus and Lavinia in the frame, he in the foreground with the brothers and she remaining in the background with the basin. At Titus' line "guilty

blood," the scene cuts to a medium close-up of Lavinia, a faint smile adorning her lips, which represents the first indication that Lavinia finds relish in the revenge, that she too, not just Titus and her male family, seeks to right the wrong done to her. Maintaining his calm, Titus announces his plan without pomp, a zooming extreme close-up of his face emphasizing the phrase "two pasties," which highlights the impending cannibalism. Titus subsequently slits the throat of each brother, the framing switching between long shots encompassing the whole scene and close-ups of the brother's heads as they bleed out into Lavinia's bowl. The death scene marks an introduction to the bloody conclusion of the banquet, a preamble that sets the theatrical tone.

The banquet scene embellishes the theatrical elements of revenge and cannibalism with camera work and editing. Following the series of shots of the brothers dying, the subsequent cut abruptly switches the scene; a close-up of two large steaming meat pies introduces the banquet sequence. An establishing long shot shows Titus entering a banquet hall with flourish in a full white chef costume, his mask of madness reinstated, Young Lucius trailing hurriedly in tow. Another cut refocuses attention on the pies, with a close-up shot of Titus cutting into a pie and sloppily depositing a large wet slice on a plate, which he places in front of Tamara in the next shot of her nonplussed face. Cuts switch between Titus and Tamara's faces as she begins eating, returning to their earlier juxtaposition even as the shots serve as reactions: Titus savors Tamara's ignorance as she dully regards his madness.

Lavinia's entrance steals Titus' attention, as he moves to her and conversationally ask Saturninus (Alan Cumming) about Virginia, which Saturninus

answers equally conversationally, a medium shot framing him at the head of the table, chewing on a piece of pie. Lavinia seems to understand and be party to Titus' ultimate plan to kill her; Saturninus' affirmative answer prompts Lavinia to move into Titus' arms, both facing the table in a two shot, facing their enemies together. Titus then breaks Lavinia's neck, a quick no-nonsense motion accompanied by an audible crack. The next shot shows the outrage of those at the banquet, and Titus' own outrage returns again as he shouts "Why there they are" and points to the pies in reference to Chiron and Demetrius. A tracking long shot shows him dancing towards Tamara, his face glazed with anger as he succinctly stabs her in the neck. A beat passes, and then Saturninus responds by climbing across the table and using a candelabrum to stab a now resigned Titus in the chest, a long tracking shot following the actions. Lucius completes the cycle of killing when he stabs Saturninus, and the motion of the scene freezes as Saturninus begins to fall, the camera circling the violent scene, creating a painting-like tableau. The scene then abruptly removes the action from the dining room to the coliseum, table and all. The circling motion of the camera precedes the circularity of the coliseum, the spiraling form evocative of the cycle of revenge and the association of the coliseum reinforcing the scene as a type of spectacle, of vengeance and of Rome.

In *Titus*, Taymor portrays Rome as a stagnant city, caught up in its own history of violence. The first scene introduces Rome as an amalgamation of time periods and dances between real and imagined, personal and public, which estabolishes two recurring visual and thematic juxtapositions. Taymor returns to where personal ends and public begins during the sacrifice of Alarbus and the

scenes that precede and follow Lavinia's rape. Furthermore, the question of reality recurs throughout the film, emphasized by filmic techniques like superimposed frames and exaggerated camera angles that blend the physical reality of scenes with the unseen emotional reality. Titus and Tamara serve as a third element of juxtaposition: their shared scenes comparing and contrasting the pair as political and personal adversaries, as ruthless leaders and as grieved parents. Additionally, with the first and last sequences involving the coliseum, Taymor includes a circular visual narrative, complementing both the cycle of revenge as a personal pursuit and violence as a Roman imperative. Circularity becomes a Roman concept within itself, defining both Rome and its citizens, showing a world on a perpetual loop of grandiose violent spectacle.

Conclusions

Titus in performance leans on violence to investigate borders in Roman society. The 1987 production uses bloodshed to develop common ground between the Roman and Goth factions, violence as an ironically uniting act, which investigates where universal human principle supersedes Roman principle. The other three plays and the one film fixate more attention on the boundaries between myth and reality, with violence as a tool not a concept itself. Excessive violence dominates both the 2003 performance and the 2014 adaptation, with both productions emphasizing the gore of the play. Yet, the 2014 production additionally amplifies the comedic potential of *Titus*, creating a dichotomy between laughter and violence, and, thus, another division where parody meets tragedy. The 2015

Cambridge adaptation also relies heavily on the humor of *Titus*, but it affixes greater concern to masculine identity than the other productions; the Cambridge performance looks at the extent that male pride prompts violence and how that alters Roman perception of the limits of violence. Taymor's film likewise projects a battle of borders within the world of Titus, reiterating where myth meets reality, but also where past meets present as she underlines the circularity of the play. Performances of *Titus Andronicus* all seek to understand how far Roman practice, ideal, principle, extends before subsiding to human nature.

Epilogue

Although cannibalism underpins Roman identity and progression in the texts of *Coriolanus* and *Titus*, cannibalism takes a back seat in performances of both plays. In some regard then, the exploration of Roman identity also loses precedence in performance. Productions of *Coriolanus* seem to want to avoid Rome entirely, and consequently, the cannibalistic language that characterizes the state throughout the play takes on a flippancy in performance, rather than serving as a glimpse of Roman identity. Directors of *Coriolanus* say less about Rome and how it functions as a society, and more about how human nature and culture shapes the individual. On the other hand, adaptations of *Titus* often grapple head on with Rome. However, with no shortage of mythic reference or violence in *Titus*, cannibalism fails to come across as a defining feature of Rome; cannibalism appears as simply another variety of extreme violence. While textually prevalent in grasping Roman individual and political identity, the references to cannibalism miss the mark in adaptations, as performances of *Coriolanus* tackle too little of Rome and those of Titus tackle too much.

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On my honor, I have neither given nor received any unacknowledged aid on this paper. Katherine K Uhlir