Shakespeare in South Africa: An Examination of Two Performances of Titus Andronicus in Apartheid and Post-Apartheid South Africa

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DEDICATION

This work is for Evan Peter Williams, ek is lief vir jou.

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ABSTRACT

The works of William Shakespeare are wide and universal. His work has been and is still consistently performed in numerous countries and venues across the globe. This thesis focuses on two performances of *Titus Andronicus*, one of Shakespeare's most controversial plays, in South Africa. One performance, directed by Dieter Reible in 1970, was produced during apartheid. The second, directed by Gregory Doran, was performed in 1995, just after the end of apartheid. These performances of *Titus* not only show the versatility and universality of Shakespeare's work, but the complexity of audience reception and directorial intention in different political landscapes. First, this thesis explores South Africa's own history with violence, race, gender, and power. Then, it discusses how these themes permeate the text of *Titus* and then how they relate to the South African performances of *Titus Andronicus* in 1970 and 1995.

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INTRODUCTION

"O, let me teach you how to knit again
This scattered corn into one mutual sheaf,
These broken limbs again into one body."

-William Shakespeare, *Titus Andronicus*, 5.3.69-71

"The recognition and the acceptance of the Other's humanity (or humanness) is a maiming of self. You have to wound the self, cut it in strips, in order to -know- that you are as similar and of the same substance of shadows."

-Breyten Breytenbach, *Intimate Stranger*

I. Why and How?

Edward Ravenscroft called *Titus Andronicus* a "heap of Rubbish" and "the most incorrect and indigested piece" of all Shakespeare's plays (A2). Indeed, he is not the only critic[1] who has expressed these sentiments. However, more recently, *Titus* has begun to regain some popularity. Wilborn Hampton reported in 1988, "[i]t was only in 1955 when Peter Brook directed Laurence Olivier and Vivien Leigh in a production at Stratford-on-Avon that a reappraisal of the play began" and that "a brilliant staging by Deborah Warner with Brian Cox as Titus, which opened last year in Stratford and is being offered by the Royal Shakespeare Company this summer in London, has helped re-establish the full power of the tragedy." However, when *Titus* is performed it is typically met with controversy. I am among those who think *Titus* deserves some redemption. For all its violence and gore, *Titus* can teach us about race, power, language, gender,

[1] T.S. Eliot famously hated *Titus*, calling it "one of the stupidest and most uninspired plays ever written, a play in

and trauma. For these reasons, *Titus* is also exceptionally appropriate for performance in South Africa—a post-colonial setting that also rarely gets critical attention in the fields of literature and theater.

This thesis will explore two different productions of *Titus Andronicus* in South Africa. The first, directed by Dieter Reible, a German director who was born in 1929, was performed in 1970[2] at the Hofmeyr Theatre in Cape Town. For this production, Breyten Breytenbach, the de facto poet laureate of South Africa, was enlisted to translate the play to Afrikaans. Reible's staging of *Titus Andronicus* was gory, violent, and sexually explicit—Reible stayed true to his source material—and Breyten Breytenbach himself was and is a controversial figure within South Africa. Breytenbach left South Africa in 1959 to go to Europe where he would marry a French-Vietnamese woman, Yolande Ngo Thi Hoang ("Breytenbach, Breyten (1939-)"). His marriage to a non-white woman prevented him from returning to South Africa; however, he did manage visits in 1972 and 1975 and was arrested and imprisoned during the second visit for terrorist and antiapartheid activities. Though he is widely respected and heralded as one of the greatest Afrikaans writers and translators of his age, his antiapartheid stances make him controversial among much of his audience.

The second South African production of *Titus* this thesis will address is a 1995 version directed by Gregory Doran, the current Artistic Director of the Royal Shakespeare Company. Unlike Reible's production, Doran's was to take place in the New South Africa—a South Africa free from apartheid. Gregory Doran's husband, Sir Antony Sher, winner of two Laurence Olivier

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[2] If there were performances of *Titus* in South Africa before 1970, they are neither recorded nor recognized.

Awards, is a South African expat, and, like Breytenbach, a controversial figure for Afrikaners. Sher left South Africa at age nineteen due to disgust with the institution of apartheid and would actively work with the AAM.[3] Sher was to play Titus in Doran's production.

These two productions go to show not only the versatility of Shakespeare's work, but also the lasting relevance of his plays and their ability to transcend both time and setting. *Titus Andronicus* is indeed an interesting choice to perform in any context, as both Doran and Reible acknowledge. The purpose of this thesis is to address both why and how *Titus* was staged in South Africa twice, twenty-five years apart, and on different sides of apartheid. I will begin by addressing South Africa itself. To understand *Titus*'s significance in a South African context, it is important to briefly address aspects of South Africa such as apartheid laws about race, the country and people's relationship with language, its long history of violence, and theater's place within South Africa. Chapter 1 will address *Titus* and will explore the question of *why Titus* is especially appropriate for performance in South Africa. In Chapter 2, I will then discuss both Reible's and Doran's productions of *Titus* by focusing on how the productions were cast and staged and the audience reactions to the performances.

II. Land of Separation

South Africa has a long and complicated history of oppression, colonization, and decolonization. Jan van Riebeeck arrived with his expedition at Table Bay on April 6, 1652 to establish a Dutch trading colony in the Cape. During the following centuries, the Dutch and other

[3] The Anti-Apartheid Movement was a group in Britain that worked against apartheid largely through boycotts.

Europeans settled the area in and around the Cape of Good Hope, or the *Kaap de Goede Hoop* as it was known in the Dutch of the time.

The British colonization of the Cape complicated matters. In September 1795, the Dutch surrendered to the British who would "begrudgingly" (Beck 42) occupy the Cape to keep it out of French hands. The Batavian Republic (the Netherlands under French rule) would then regain the Cape in 1803, only to lose it again in 1806 (Beck 45). The poor relationship[4] between the British, English-speaking settlers and the Dutch-speaking settlers, or "Boers"[5] or Afrikaners, eventually led to the Anglo-Boer War in 1899, a guerilla war that Roger B. Beck refers to as "the twentieth-century's first "total war"" (93). In 1902 only around 22,000 Afrikaner soldiers remained and in May of the same year, they surrendered to the British under the promise of "eventual political autonomy" (Beck 94). The Act of Union created a unified and nominally independent South Africa in 1910. In 1931 South Africa became a fully independent member of the Commonwealth, and in 1961 South Africa separated from the Commonwealth, becoming the Republic of South Africa. What was left was a diverse group of native peoples, descendants of settlers, and immigrants ruled by a powerful minority.

From the beginning, South Africa was a land of segregation. Ellen Hellmann writes that the "first idea of separation [in South Africa] took shape in the proposal to plant an impenetrable thicket of almond trees to enclose the Dutch East India Company's domain" (1). The term that is

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[4] This poor relationship with also resulted in the Great Trek, beginning in 1836, in which many Boers migrated away from the Cape to avoid the British altogether.
[5] The Dutch word for "farmer."

most often associated with South Africa is "apartheid." Apartheid[6] began in 1948; when the National Party came into power as the result of Afrikaner nationalism, which was itself, rooted in ideas of colonialism and racism. Gail Gerhart describes the ideology that shaped apartheid:

> Apartheid ideology held that the destiny willed by God for the Afrikaner *volk* was also the correct path for other peoples defined by common language, culture, and historical experience— including Africans. Contrary to the liberal belief that Africans should be encouraged to assimilate European culture, apartheid stood for the greatest possible segregation of Africans in order that they might pursue the unhindered development of their own God-given destinies as ethnic nations. As National Party policy unfolded after 1948, this idealistic do-unto-others vision convinced many Afrikaners that apartheid was grounded in moral principles, even if these might not be fully realized in practice.

Though apartheid policy may have "convinced many Afrikaners that [it] was grounded in moral principles" (Gerhart), it was still erected around the belief that it was necessary to keep cultures and groups separate. It was ultimately grounded in racism as it was "[i]nspired by the rise of Nazism and fed by the pseudoscientific literature of eugenics then being produced in the United States and Britain" and "South African eugenicists popularized a theory of biological determinism that cast the Afrikaner *volk* as a special breed threatened by degradation through genetic mixing with other races" (Gerhart).

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[6] "Apartheid" is the Afrikaans word meaning "separate" or "being apart." It literally translates to "apart-hood" or "separate-hood."

However, there were racial laws that predated apartheid. John Dugard writes, "[s]evere restrictions were placed on the freedom of movement of Africans by the pass laws,[7] which can be traced back to 1809, and which were once described by a National Party spokesman as being 'as old as civilisation in our country'" (80). Dugard then cites a 1928 proclamation that forbade native peoples from meeting in groups larger than ten (81) and the Riotous Assembly Act, which outlawed "meetings where hostile feelings between Europeans and Africans might be engendered" (81-2). The goals of these acts were to prevent African natives from creating groups that could possibly overthrow their European oppressors. The Natives Land Act of 1913, which Ellen Hellmann describes as an Act that "set aside scheduled Native Reserves for exclusive African ownership and prohibited Africans from purchasing land in rural areas outside the Reserves without the approval of the Governor-General" (2), furthered the separation between different racial groups. In 1950 the Group Areas Act was passed. This Act "provide[d] for the creation of separate group areas in towns and cities for whites, Africans, and Coloureds" (Dugard 85), and according to Dugard, by 1975, there were 58,834 displaced Coloured families and 1,594 displaced white families (85). These Acts in 1913 and 1950 served to create spaces of legal rather than nominal separation. Separation in South Africa then became codified. The government could remove anyone—of any race—from his or her home on the grounds of segregation. These laws gave the white government the power to totally control the movement of its citizens.

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[7] Pass laws were laws that required native peoples to carry passes that dictated where they could travel.

While South Africa is now infamous for apartheid, its laws did not always affect the world's view of it. John Barratt claims that "[b]efore and throughout the Second World War South Africa, although a small power, was a respected member of the Western-dominated world community" (214). Barratt attributes South Africa's fall from international favor after World War II to the "widespread revulsion against racism and special attention, in the Western world particularly, to the concept of human rights" (215) in response to the atrocities committed in Nazi Germany. He writes, "[a]s the other colonial powers departed [the African continent], South Africa was increasingly seen as the 'remnant' and as being unwilling to grant its own black people what was being achieved by them elsewhere on the continent" (Barratt 219). John Dugard writes, "South Africa not only remained impervious to this jurisprudential wind of change: it rejected it" (83). The country's full rejection of change was made clear on May 31, 1961 when South Africa voted to become a Republic and chose to relinquish its Commonwealth status. Barratt claims that this caused South Africa "to move further into isolation" (226). This isolation would only cause more tension between the different groups and cultures of South Africa.

To understand these racial tensions in South Africa further, it is important to take a look at apartheid classifications of race. During the Population Registration Act of 1950, citizens of South Africa were required to document their race with the government; thus, each citizen was classified as one of three races: "white", "black", or "Coloured.[8]" The Population Registration Act reads:

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[8] Unlike in the United States, in South Africa "Coloured" is a non-derogatory legal term for a person of mixed race.

> Every person whose name is included in the register shall be classified by the Director as a white person, a coloured person or a native, as the case may be, and every coloured person and every native whose name is so included shall be classified by the Director according to the ethnic or other group to which he belongs. (5.1)

The Act also legally defines these three races. According to the Population Registration Act, a Coloured person is "a person who is not a white person or a native" (1.iii), a native (or black) person is "a person who in fact is or is generally accepted as a member of any aboriginal race or tribe of Africa" (1.x), and a white person is "a person who in appearance obviously is, or who is generally accepted as a white person, but does not include a person who, although in appearance obviously a white person, is generally accepted as a coloured person" (1.xv). The language of racial classification within the Population Registration Act is vague: "A person who in appearance obviously is a white person shall for the purposes of this Act be presumed to be a white person until the contrary is proved" (19.1). The term "obviously is a white person" indicates that these racial classifications were made mostly according to appearance, and elsewhere in the Act, procedures are outlined for challenging one's classification.

This racial hierarchy is, of course, more complicated in practice than on paper. Within the "black" category, there are, of course, different native tribes, the largest of them being Xhosa and Zulu, who, before colonization, warred between themselves. There are subgroups of the "white" category as well—the Dutch and the British. By all accounts, the Dutch and the British had vastly different ideals about the governance of South Africa, and when the British signed over its rule, both groups struggled to maintain their identities. Within all of these racial subgroups are

levels upon levels of cultural groups that cannot be confined by their racial classifications—each has its own languages, sets of values, and way of life.

The overall goal of apartheid was to honor the "pledge that whites would be supreme in their own areas and that other people, under white direction, would be appropriately compartmentalized elsewhere…" (Gerhart). One of the obvious goals of apartheid was to control bodies, quite literally. Before the Population Registration Act of 1950, there was the Immorality Act of 1927:

> Any European male who has illicit carnal intercourse with a native female, and any native male who has illicit carnal intercourse with a European female, in circumstances which do not amount to rape, an attempt to commit rape, indecent assault, or a contravention of section *two* or *four* of the Girls' and Mentally Defective Women's Protection Act, 1916 (Act No. 3 of 1916) shall be guilty of an offence and liable on conviction to imprisonment for a period not exceeding five years. (1)

The Immorality Act of 1927 also provides guidelines for females violating the act: "Any native female who permits any European male to have illicit carnal intercourse with her and any European female who permits any native male to have illicit carnal intercourse with her shall be guilty of an offence and liable on conviction to imprisonment for a period not exceeding four years," (2) and also stipulates punishment for "[a]ny owner or occupier of any premises who knowingly permits the use of such premises for the purpose of any offence against any provision of this Act" (4). The goals of this Act are clear: to prevent interracial coupling and children resulting from those unions. The concerns of the white South African government were then not

only to prevent different races from coming together, but also to regulate reproduction. As reproductive rights and issues necessarily concentrate on women, it is fair to state that this was one way for the South African government to also regulate women. Hannah Britton states, "[h]istorically, women in South Africa have also faced challenges in terms of gender subordination, but this cannot be separated from the divisions among women along racial classifications and class positions created by colonialism and apartheid." Colonialism brought Western ideals of gender roles to the African continent. Women, whether black or white or Coloured, were considered inferior to men; however, white women were afforded privileges that black and Coloured women were not. White women in South Africa gained the right to vote in 1930, but black women could not vote until the first racially inclusive elections in 1994. However, according to Britton, women were instrumental in the abolition of apartheid, and:

> Even though there were massive political and class differences among women, during key moments in the struggle, women came together and unified across racial, religious, and class divisions. For example, women of all races united to oppose the pass laws, which strictly governed black women's movements from one area to another.

It is clear from this example and others that these attempts by the South African government to regulate female bodies ultimately caused many women to unite in protest against oppressive apartheid era laws. Britton even suggests that "[w]omen were labeled the "backbone" of the struggle or the "silent strength" of the antiapartheid movement." Unregulated bodies that were neither white nor male posed a problem to the apartheid regime.

The Population Registration Act of 1950 followed up on the guidelines put in place by the Immorality Act of 1927 by requiring citizens to register their races with the government. Different races were restricted to different areas. Non-whites had to carry identification cards. Certain jobs were only available to specific races. These two Acts created the core of apartheid laws. When apartheid ended in 1991 and the first racially inclusive democratic elections were held in 1994, South Africa was remade—on paper. However, systems of oppressive, institutionalized racism do not disappear overnight. In the townships, Zulu and Xhosa groups fought for control of what would become the "New South Africa." One of the goals of apartheid was to not only keep whites and non-whites separate, but also to keep different cultural groups within the non-white categories apart. These divisions sparked conflict not only between whites and blacks, but also between groups of blacks. The division of blacks under the apartheid system led to the creation of two political parties: the African National Congress (ANC) and Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC). While both parties were known for their commitment to the return of South Africa to Black rule, the PAC was formed when some members "left the ANC because they disagreed with its nonracial approach and advocated a bolder, purely black, African-centered focus to the liberation struggle" ("Pan Africanist Congress"). Ultimately, Nelson Mandela's party, the African National Congress, the Xhosa, took power. For forty years, the old system of apartheid classification had been in place. Even after Nelson Mandela's victory, race—and cultural identity on many different levels—still defined, and largely continues to define, status and opportunity in South Africa.

These divisions created violence that was multifaceted and inequality that permeated the everyday lives of non-white South Africans. Ileana Carmen Rogobete writes that Blacks

"described their experiences during apartheid as a continuous process of living under terror, suffering constant humiliation, violence, marginalisation, poverty and lack of freedom" (106). Perhaps one of the most notorious and consequential acts of violence, the Sharpeville Massacre, occurred on March 21, 1960. During a protest near Johannesburg, sixty-nine black South Africans were killed by the police. *The Encyclopedia of South Africa* claims that "[t]he Sharpeville Massacre was a turning point in apartheid and antiapartheid politics and signaled the beginning of a particularly brutal and repressive period of the apartheid era" ("Sharpeville Massacre"). The South Africa that followed was an even more violent one. Philip Frankel writes, "South Africa in the wake of Sharpeville is no exception to the fact that state-sponsored killings, mistaken or otherwise, harden both the political and military battlelines" (183). The Sharpeville Massacre lead to a State of Emergency, the banning of two major political parties, and the armed resistance of those two parties which both formerly espoused non-violent resistance.

After their banning, the ANC and PAC set up training camps outside of South Africa to instruct guerilla fighters (Redding), but it was not just black national parties that militarized. Kenneth W. Grundy writes in 1986 there was "a closer than normal...relationship between the armed forces and the white citizenry" since "[g]overnment puts its trust in military power because whites want to trust their future to military power" (70). Robert Cullen writes in 1985 that "[i]n the sprawling black townships, where militants control the streets, police enter only in armed convoys" (25). Cullen also recounts an instance of police brutality in which:

> Ebrahim Carelse, 31 and the father of three, strolled across the street to visit a neighbor. Moments later, eyewitnesses recall, a policeman charged forward, kicked in the door of the neighbor's home and shot Carelse in the head. When

> angry neighbors began to riot, armored personnel carriers (APC's) arrived on the scene. Nearby a group of 10-year-old boys was playing soccer, and as an APC passed them one boy brandished a clenched fist. An eyewitness saw a police officer atop the APC fire tear gas at the players. The officer then pulled out a shotgun and blasted away at one child running for cover. Another South African town had learned a lesson in respect. (25)

The violence that followed the Sharpeville Massacre defined South Africa as a nation of unrest. Graeme Simpson, a founder of the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation writes:

> It has been argued that the legacy of apartheid has bequeathed to South Africa a "culture of violence". This has been rooted in the notion that violence in South Africa has become normative rather than deviant and it has come to be regarded as an appropriate means of resolving social, political and even domestic conflict. This is quite easily visible across the entire political spectrum, where violence has been sanctioned as a means both of maintaining political power, as well as an accepted means of attaining change or resolving conflict.

According to Simpson, the violence that stemmed from apartheid and antiapartheid movements has caused violence to become more acceptable and even "normative" in South Africa. Even Nelson Mandela, largely regarded as one of the most influential and respected leaders of the twentieth century, endorsed violence. He cofounded uMkhonto we Sizwe, the militaristic arm of the ANC which was responsible for numerous bombings, torture, and executions. According to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa, in a report presented to Nelson Mandela in 1998, "[p]olice statistics indicate that, in the period 1976 to 1986, approximately 130

people were killed by ‘terrorists’. Of these, about thirty were members of various security forces and one hundred were civilians. Of the civilians, forty were white and sixty black” (326-27). While the number may not seem exorbitant, it should be noted that this violence was guerilla style, widespread, and public. Violence, it seems, had become the norm for civilians and military and police forces alike.

Violence was also not limited to interracial attacks. Many instances of violence during apartheid were between blacks. On one side, there were antiapartheid native peoples; on the other, there were blacks in the employ of the state who some regarded as white sympathizers or as benefitting from the oppressive apartheid system when others were not afforded those opportunities. One example of such violence is the murder of Thamsanqua Kinikini. Nancy Cooper reports for *Newsweek* in 1985:

> In Kwanobuhle township, a black mob came after [a black] councilor Thamsanqua Kinikini, the only member of the local council who had refused to resign his position. First the crowd hacked Kinikini’s 18-year-old son to pieces. When the crowd came for Kinikini, he opened fire with a revolver. The mob could not be stopped, and Kinikini used the last bullet to shoot his 12-year-old son, sparing him a worse death. The rioters tore Kinikini apart, then set the bodies on fire. (40)

Kinikini was a black official who was killed for taking part in the apartheid government, and for even having vigilantes of his own:

> Defense witnesses had testified about a virtual “reign of terror” conducted for many months by vigilantes under the Kinikinis. One girl told how she had been

> abducted by the Kinikini boys, raped repeatedly and then kept in a coffin overnight at the funeral home; other youths said they had been picked up by the vigilantes as suspected anti-apartheid activists, beaten and locked in the funeral parlor's freezer with corpses awaiting burial. (Parks)

These types of incidents were heavily publicized both locally and internationally. While most people saw them for what they were—the result of an oppressive system—supporters of apartheid used them to suggest that native peoples were unfit to govern themselves. During the twentieth century, there was violence and unrest on all sides in South Africa. The violence and brutality was daily and, in the words of Simpson, "normative." Violence, it seems, permeated every part of South African life during apartheid—including language.

According to T.G. Reagan, "[t]he *taalstryd*, or 'language struggle', has been a central point of disagreement and debate throughout the history of South Africa" (422). During colonization native languages were largely ignored, according to Neville Alexander. Alexander writes:

> The Dutch East India Company more or less ignored the indigenous peoples' languages. Under British rule, however, especially beginning with Lord Charles Somerset's governorship, a century of Anglicization ensued, which was specifically aimed at the Dutch/Afrikaans-speaking population. In spite of sporadic, but increasingly violent, resistance on the latter's part to the English-only policy, it was extremely successful.

The power struggle between English and Dutch/Afrikaans as the "language of power and high status in all the key social domains" (Alexander) forced native peoples to learn one or both of

their oppressors' languages. From 1901 to 1905, English and Dutch became the official languages of the new Union of South Africa, with Afrikaans eventually being included as a form Dutch in 1925 (Alexander). Before this inclusion, Afrikaans was considered a creole and, in some cases, a rough, inferior language. Language, in turn, became power, and the language of power was English—until apartheid.

After the beginning of apartheid, "the National Party's victory in the elections of 1948 marked the final acknowledgment of Afrikaans as a public language of high status" (Alexander). Afrikaans was then used as both the public language and as the language of wealth and power. Alexander also writes, though, that "[t]his had the paradoxical consequence that much more attention was given to African languages given apartheid's emphasis on defining South Africa's population along racial and ethnic lines." However, only those native peoples who could master not only their own language, but also Afrikaans, were afforded certain career and education opportunities. The language a person spoke determined what kind of school he or she attended, how successful he or she was in school, and ultimately what kind of career he or she was prepared for. Webb writes, "It is plain common-sense that cognitive development can only occur in and through a language the learner knows very well" (10). Command of language in a multi-linguistic culture is crucial for survival. Sarah Murray writes:

> It is a truism to say that policies of language and education are inherently political, but nowhere more so than in South Africa where language has been closely bound up in the system of ethnic and racial division. During the colonial and apartheid periods, language was a defining characteristic of ethnicity and – partly through the process of standardisation of African languages – was used to

> set the boundaries of ethnic identities (Herbert 1992). At the height of apartheid, these boundaries were also spatial: many people were removed to ethnic – mainly rural – 'homelands', and urban townships were linguistically zoned. (435)

Language, along with skin color and gender, is also considered a defining factor of a South African's identity and privilege.

Nowhere is this politicization of language better illustrated than in the Soweto Student Uprising. In Soweto in 1976, when black students protested the Bantu education system,[9] which was brought about by an Act in 1953 with the intention to segregate the school system, instructional language was one of their concerns. The government had just declared that "arithmetic, social studies, geography, and history be taught in Afrikaans" ("Soweto Student Uprising…"); however, "[f]ew teachers were fluent in Afrikaans, which many within the resistance movement regarded as the oppressor's language. In addition, Afrikaans was not helpful to students seeking clerical work, because English was preferred in the business sector" ("Soweto Student Uprising…"). Thus, English, *not* Afrikaans, was becoming the equalizer in an increasingly globalized world. Victor Webb writes, "…black parents in South Africa overwhelmingly prefer[ed] English as the language of learning and teaching for their children, for the simple reason that English is equated with success and opportunity" (10). During this uprising in Soweto, which turned into a series of demonstrations, approximately five hundred people (mostly teenage students) were killed in the struggle for a fair education system, which

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[9] Initially, the goal of the Bantu Education Act was to allow Africans to retain their separate cultures, but remain subordinate to whites. The education students received at these schools was far inferior to that which students obtained at white schools. Later, in the interest of imposing more control over these Bantu institutions, Afrikaans became the instructional language. ("Bantu Education")

included a fair instructional language ("Soweto Student Uprising…").

Another debate in the conflict over education in South Africa is about what kind of education is valuable for all South African citizens. Often, this debate takes place around literature—and very often, around Shakespeare. As Chris Thurman writes, "…Shakespeare can't be viewed or read–and therefore can't be taught–in an ahistorical or apolitical vacuum. If we are to teach Shakespeare in Africa, we cannot teach the text alone. We owe it to students to acknowledge, indeed to emphasise, and then to analyse the baggage that Shakespeare brings with him."

III. Theater and Shakespeare in South Africa

According to South African playwright and professor Temple Hauptfleisch, "[u]nder the Dutch (1652-1799), there was little record of formal theater" and "formal institutionalized theater only came with the British rule of the region (1799-1910), when some governors encouraged amateur theater in the garrisons and among the civilians, and supported visits by professional companies from the mother country and colonies in the east." Hauptfleisch also states that these performances included "a great deal of Shakespeare— both in the original and the translated languages." According to Jane Plastow, the first production of Shakespeare's work in Africa was in Sierra Leone in 1607 and was performed by "presumably homesick sailors" (x).

As for South Africa's history of original theater, Hauptfleisch explains that the first "indigenous" plays were written in Dutch (and later Afrikaans). This tradition of Afrikaans theater would prove to bear "significant fruits" (Hauptfleisch) during the twentieth century when

the cultural boycott[10] prevented plays from the rest of the English-speaking world from being imported to South Africa (Hauptfleisch). Thus, the language many plays were written in was Afrikaans, and, according to Hauptfleisch, this aided in the "search for the Afrikaner identity." Megan Lewis suggests that these Afrikaans-language plays both uphold and shape this Afrikaner identity. She states, "[m]ore often than not, these performances...follow a common narrative arc and remain faithful to stock character types" and that this narrative arc usually involves the idea of bringing "civilization to darkness" (Lewis 15). This narrative reinforces the ideals of colonialism and imperialism and this type of theater also reinforces certain ideas for everyday life. Women's representation on the Afrikaner stage, according to Megan Lewis, reinforced ideals of Western gender roles. She states, "[b]ecause Afrikaner whiteness is an extension of its patriarchy, these scenarios reinforce a particular brand of rugged masculinity and docile feminity" (Lewis 15). Western theater, then, was a way to not only construct whiteness and the Afrikaner identity (for both men and women), but to perform it before the native peoples. The theater becomes a space of colonization.

Before Western theater arrived in South Africa, though, there were traditions that some scholars, including Mzo Sirayi, consider "theater." Sirayi writes, "[t]he growing volume of contemporary African theatre has produced the notion that the seed of contemporary African theatre came from Europe" (14). Sirayi argues that this is not the case, but that the definition of

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[10] Championed by the Anti-Apartheid Movement (AAM), both cultural and economic boycotts of South Africa were instituted by various nations and organizations that were opposed to apartheid. Believing that these boycotts would put pressure on South Africa to reform race relations, the AAM caused South Africa to become isolated from much of the world until the abolition of apartheid.

"theater" needs to be broadened beyond the Western concept of it. He suggests the term "cultural performance" (Sirayi 15) to apply to this broader definition of theater. Oral narratives, wedding celebrations, doctors' celebrations, cultural festivals, and religious ceremonies fall under this expanded definition because they all "have a limited time span, a beginning and end, a place and occasion of performance, an organised programme of activities, a set of performers and an audience" (Sirayi 15).

Jane Plastow writes that though Shakespeare was originally used in Africa "as part of the 'civilising mission'" and "to teach English and inculturate an idea of the superiority of English culture", Africans began to adopt the Bard and use him "as part of their hybrid consciousness" and that "[c]onsequently Shakespeare was appropriated" as he so often is (x). One of South Africa's most notable Shakespeare translators, Solomon "Sol" Plaatje, a black South African, translated many works into his native seTswana ("*Plaatje, Solomon (Sol) Thsekisho")*. David Johnson writes that, "[t]he William Shakespeare Sol Plaatje might have encountered in the Cape Colony in 1916 was a figure of contradictory qualities" (80). These qualities, according to Johnson, include, "his status as quintessential English hero defending Albion from the Germans; his universal humanity transcending national boundaries; and his unique abilities as instructor of youth in ways of obedience and moral rectitude" (80). In summation "[e]mphasizing his Englishness coexisted in tension with a sense of universal (and eternal) relevance to other peoples and contexts" (Johnson 81). While Shakespeare undoubtedly represents Englishness, he somehow simultaneously represents humanity. This is an aspect of the Bard that was realized even as early as 1916, during Sol Plaatje's lifetime. Shakespeare's stories were being used, by

Plaatje and by others, to explain, exemplify, and express ways of life outside the context of Englishness.

Though performances of *Titus* in South Africa are not recorded before Dieter Reible's in 1970, many of Shakespeare's plays were performed well before then. The very first formal theater in South Africa opened with a performance of *Henry IV, Part I* in 1801 ("Robben Island 'Bible'…"). According to Rohan Quince, the first performance of *Othello* in South Africa was in 1818 and has since then "appeared regularly on the South African stage, its intervention in the discourse of racial politics in the society strewn with ambiguities" (93). Quince states that *Julius Caesar* "has been considered one of the most suitable" of Shakespeare's plays for teaching in South African schools (59).[11] He suggests that this is because of the play's themes: "a ruler is assassinated in the name of freedom; the result is civil war ending in the defeat and death of the assassins" (Quince 59). It was a favorite of both the British government and the Afrikaners as "a warning" (Quince 77) to would-be freedom fighters.

The first Afrikaans production of a Shakespeare play was *Hamlet* in 1947 and "Afrikaans productions of Shakespeare during the apartheid era reflected Afrikaner ideological and cultural values" (Quince 14). Shakespeare in South Africa has always been part of an agenda. In 1972, a Zulu version of *Macbeth* called *Umabatha* was produced by a black playwright and "directed by liberal white academics, performed by black actors, partially sponsored by white corporations, and sanctioned by the white government" (Quince 45). After this incredibly successful production, however, Quince suggests that Shakespeare's image in South Africa reverted to "an

[11] Quince lists the earliest performance of *Julius Caesar* in South Africa as 1898.

icon of European culture, mastery of whose texts is a test of civilization" and "[c]ommercially successful Black theatre productions were protest plays…or liberation musicals" (57). Though these productions were all varied and diverse, they set the stage for Reible's 1970 *Titus* and later Doran's 1995 version. When these other performances and plays are taken into consideration along with their existing significance in South Africa, one asks, "Why *Titus*?" When Reible and Doran could have chosen any other play, *why* was *Titus* appropriate for a South African audience? The themes present in *Titus*—violence, gender, race, issues of language—have been ever-present issues in South Africa since Jan van Riebeeck arrived in 1652. These points in South Africa's history lead to productions of *Titus* that attempt to expose these issues in South African society.

CHAPTER 1

Why *Titus*?: An Examination of Themes in Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*

When examining *Titus Andronicus*'s relationship with South Africa, many scholars have asked the question, "Why *Titus*?" Philip C. Kolin eloquently states that, "*Titus*, like other Shakespearean plays, holds the mirror up to what is universally abhorrent in nature" (306). This is a central reason why *Titus* resonated with a South African audience. The play deals with many themes—race, gender, language, and violence are among them. However, it is because of the play's relationship with race that it is most appropriate for South Africa. The action of *Titus*, the conflicts, the violence, the politics, revolve around race and nation: Tamora's affair would not be as salacious had it not been with a black man, the emperor marries an outsider, Rome itself becomes barbaric in the wake of Gothic integration. The presence of many "Others" and their interactions gives the play its special relevance to South African audiences, which themselves are full of Others.

I. Race, the Other, and Racial Categorization in *Titus Andronicus*

There are three racial categories in *Titus*: Roman, Goth, and Moor. This three-level racial stratification makes the casting and staging of South African versions of *Titus* especially interesting, because in South Africa, there are three levels of racial stratification, as well: white, Coloured, and black. *Titus*'s relevance to South Africa becomes even more significant when taken into account that *Titus* centers on the integration of two races, or nationalities, the Romans and the Goths. Upon her marriage to Saturninus, the Queen of the Goths declares, "I am incorporate in Rome, / A Roman now adopted heavily" (2.1.459-460). With this declaration,

Tamora suggests that these national affiliations are fluid. All it takes for Tamora to "become Roman" is to marry in. After declaring herself a Roman, Tamora then takes it upon herself to dispense Rome's law and justice, requiring the native Romans to "ask pardon of his majesty" (2.1.470) her husband. This fluidity of national allegiance gives Tamora the privilege of acting not only as a Roman, but as Rome's empress. This position is meant to exemplify the pinnacle of Roman womanhood, and it has been given to Tamora instead, say, of Lavinia who is not only a native Roman, but also an Andronici. However, it is clear to the audience that this perceived assimilation is for nothing more than Tamora's own revenge. Rather than a true conversion of national identity, the act is a means to her vengeful ends. In this case, the outsider only becomes an insider to sow chaos from within and shows no desire to adopt Roman custom unless it can serve as a vehicle for her revenge.

Aaron the Moor is not afforded this opportunity to assimilate into Roman society. From the very outset of the play, he plots how he will use Tamora's incorporation into Roman society for his own benefit, by being "wanton" with her (2.1.21) and advising Chiron and Demetrius to have their way with Lavinia. As the play progresses, he further isolates himself from the rest of the characters by his plotting and scheming, even abandoning Tamora when she sends him their child and instructs him to kill it. It is also worth mentioning that Aaron frequently enters onto the stage alone to address the audience in the absence of other characters. While this could be explained away as exposition or a device for character development, it also marks Aaron as isolated from Goth and Roman. He is in league with no one in the end, and in the end, he is left the most isolated of all the characters as he is sentenced to die, alone, buried up to his neck.

All in all, Aaron's character is complex and complicated. Eldred Jones writes,

"Shakespeare makes Aaron an artist in villainy. His smoothness during his devilish ministrations is quite shamelessly cynical" (151). However, Aaron is also problematic. Though he is intelligent, enterprising, and opportunistic, he is still the self-proclaimed villain: "Let fools do good, and fair men call for grace / Aaron will have a soul as black as his face" (3.1.203-204). On the one hand, he is *not* Othello, and it is difficult to be sympathetic to a man who encourages rape and murder, even if the audience is sympathetic to the conditions he endures because of his race.

On the other hand, Aaron is directly responsible for very little in the play--he rarely carries out these gruesome acts himself. Leslie A. Fiedler writes, "Aaron is, however, by no means responsible for most of the horrors he recounts, only, somehow, *symbolic* of them all, an embodiment of the psychic blackness they figure forth, as if the play were not merely one more projection upon blacks of intolerable white guilt, but an analysis of the mechanism itself" (158). Fiedler also claims that Aaron has a "desire to seem the world's sole bugaboo" (161). Fiedler claims that Aaron's villainy "is established more in speech than action" and that he has been relegated to the role of "sideline plotter and egger-on" (160). So while Aaron would like to claim these misdeeds and the mayhem of the play for himself, he cannot. Though he does instigate the rape of Lavinia, he does not commit the act himself; even though he has already been characterized as lusty and sexually deviant, he leaves the pivotal act to Chiron and Demetrius. It is also Aaron's silver tongue that convinces Titus to allow Aaron to remove his hand. This makes Aaron's role as the "black villain" complicated and problematic. Fiedler even states that he has been "deprive[d] of his mythic potency" (160). His role is problematic because, while it does not create an active villain of a black character, it leaves the audience to wonder how the violence

could have played out without his encouragement.

These three differing races and national identities cause the characters to become Others to one another. While Aaron is not the most obvious Other in *Titus*, he is not the only. The Goths are always set apart from the Romans as a separate, less-civilized group. Francesca T. Royster writes, “Aaron is black and, as an outsider, is barbarous in Roman eyes. But, just as important, Tamora's susceptibility to Aaron provides a multihued palette of barbarism. The play makes us aware that Tamora is always a Goth...she is never absorbed into the body of Rome” (433). Royster also draws attention to the fact that, like Aaron, Tamora is also marked as different from the Romans based on her own skin color, and that it is Saturninus who calls attention to the difference between Tamora’s “hue” and Lavinia’s (433). Royster’s argument is relatively unique in that she classifies the Goths as having a skin color differing from the Romans. She draws attention to these racial categorizations that set the Goths apart from the Romans by more than just place of origin or national identification or degree of barbarism. Ultimately, her whiteness cannot save her—Tamora remains a barbarous outsider.

Tamora at least attempts, or pretends, to shift her national identity after her marriage to the Roman Saturninus. Carolyn Sale explores the concept of racial fluidity in reference to Aaron:

> Suggesting not only that a "coal-black" hue may disappear over time, but also that whiteness may be *acquired*, the play airs a theory of the relation of "race" to "hue" that is a crucial aspect of Aaron's polyvalent figure. Both figure and theory reflect late sixteenth-century historiography in asking the English to remember their own racial history, in which they were considered "barbarous" by the Romans. (27)

Sale asserts that these concerns about barbarism and the possibility that national identities and insider-outsider statuses can shift were present in the minds of Shakespeare's Renaissance audience. In *Titus* then, Aaron and Tamora, to a degree, represent anxieties not only of the racial Other and outsider, but the unstable identity of the Self that can only be identified when put up against the Other.

Often, the presence of the Other in a narrative suggests that the characters will come to see themselves in the face of the outsider. In the case of *Titus*, the famous line, "Thou art a Roman; be not barbarous" (1.1.375), draws a line between what Romans should be and what barbarians (Goths and Moors) should be. The implication is that one cannot be both Roman and barbarous. One cannot be a violent insider--violence and dissent come only from the fringe. This, of course, is shown to be untrue over the course of the play--Titus and company become just as barbarous as their Goth counterparts. Perhaps they even were from the beginning when "Alarbus' limbs are lopped" (1.1.143).

The Other in *Titus* can serve many interpretive purposes, though. Emily C. Bartels writes:

> Whether England's cross-cultural discourse was designed "to mediate the shock of contact on the frontier," to justify colonialist projects or instantiate England's professed supremacy, to explore and exhibit "spectacles of strangeness," or to effect some other conscious or unconscious agenda, its early visions began to outline space and close off borders, to discriminate under the guise of discerning, and to separate the Other from the self. (265-66)

Bartels states that Aaron is one of these Others, whose function is multifaceted, but ultimately serves as a way to separate the English (for whom the Romans are a stand-in) self from the

dangerous Other. Aaron's Otherness becomes complicated, just as the Moor[12] is complicated in Renaissance England. Bartels explains, "[f]or what emerges as a key focus of "othering" within Renaissance depictions of Moors is behavior that paradoxically...showed them too like the English--behavior that might undermine England's claim to a natural dominance and superiority" (266). Aaron, too, challenges the superiority of the ruling class in *Titus Andronicus*. As the violence in the play unfolds, Goth, Roman, and Moor become almost indistinguishable in their collective savagery. Bartels further explains how these borders and boundaries break down in the wake of the action of the play. She marks Saturninus's coronation as the turning point for the Romans, stating, "[w]hen Saturninus takes command, however, the differentiation between the two worlds, between inside and outside, self and other, is disrupted, and with it the idea of right and what is right in Rome" (268). While Saturninus resolves the conflict over Lavinia by taking Tamora as his wife, it is this action of "bringing the outside in" that gives the Goths (and Aaron) a position to enact revenge.

Titus himself is not immune to becoming like the outsiders about whom he is so anxious. Maurice Charney writes, "...it is one of the points of the revenge tragedy that Titus must abandon his Roman integrity and become barbarous in order to defeat the barbarians" (264). This again represents anxieties about the self and the Other. Eventually, by the end of the play, there is no difference between Titus and the Goths. As Titus shifts from Roman to revenger, the differences between the two become less obvious. Brecken Rose Hancock writes, "Titus's actions as Roman hero actually serve to break down the distinctions between Roman and outsider" and that

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[12] "Moor," according to Bartels, is an ambiguous term, encompassing many types of Others in the eyes of the Renaissance English.

"...Shakespeare blurs the distinction between state-sanctioned execution and murder, between Roman and revenger" (3). As the play comes to a close, Roman and revenger have become one in the same.

As these lines between Roman and revenger are blurred, *Titus* also calls up anxieties about nation and national identity. As the Goths and Aaron are constructed as barbarians, Titus and his Roman kin are built up to be civilized, honorable, and noble. Titus's very first characterization are in Marcus's lines of praise: "A nobler man, a braver warrior, / Lives not within the city walls" (1.1.25-26). The Roman identity is built by setting it up in direct contrast to the Gothic identity; however, this binary quickly collapses when Titus begins returning the Goths' vengeance. As the cycle of revenge continues, Roman, Goth, and Moor become indistinguishable. If Titus's identity has fallen to a state of barbarism, then Rome has as well, since Titus is clearly indicative of Rome and the Roman identity--he is initially elected as emperor and titled "*Pious*" (1.1.22-23) after all. Because Titus's self if seemingly so malleable, the play suggests an instability of what it means to have a nation and a national identity. *Titus* constantly asks itself what it means to be Roman and those definitions are constantly failing due to stress from within and without.

II. The Relationship Between Language and Violence in *Titus Andronicus*

Titus Andronicus is a play that deeply concerns itself with language and its function. The plot is wrought with misused metaphor, twisted language, and corruption of text. Much like in South Africa's own relationship with language, a character's success relies heavily on his or her command of texts. Much of the chaos in *Titus* derives from these attempts to understand or appropriate language. Gillian Murray Kendall claims that "[o]ne might say that *Titus Andronicus*

is a new kind of revenge play, one in which truth avenges the violence done to it by the conventions of art and physical reality begins to triumph over the distortions of metaphor" (309). The corruption of language and literalization of dead metaphors are what cause the mayhem in the play, she suggests, writing that "in this play, to lend one's hand is to risk dismemberment" (Kendall 299). When Titus states, "Lend me thy hand" (3.1.186), he literally loses his own.

One example of these attempts to command language is Titus' effort to turn metaphorical word and written text into action. Titus attempts to materialize words by tying them to arrows and wrapping them around weapons. In Act Four, Scene Two, young Lucius delivers a message to the Goths in the form of "a bundle of weapons, and verses writ upon them" (s.d.). Rather than send only words, or weapons, or literal violence, Titus has chosen to use word and weapon in concert, leaving the meaning behind this gesture to be interpreted by the Goths. He trusts that they will read his message correctly, and he intends to turn word into violent action. In the following scene, Titus brings "arrows with letters on the ends of them" to the stage (4.3.s.d.). He intends to shoot these letters to the heavens in hopes that they will reach the gods and that the deities will dole out justice. After they loose the arrows, Titus tells Publius: "See, see, thou hast shot off one of Taurus' horns" (4.3.69). Being that the arrows carry letters, Titus gleefully imagines that his words can provoke action or cause damage. That is precisely what words, for better or worse, turn into throughout the play—action.

This action, for the most part, leads to violence. "Lend me thy hand" (3.1.186) has become an iconic line in the Shakespeare canon not only for its use as a handy metaphor, but also for its function within the text. In his book *Shakespearean Metadrama*, James L. Calderwood writes:

> Since Titus's "word" would not serve as legal tender for the ransom of his sons, perhaps his hand, which he hastily severs, will. The transaction that finally takes place turns out to be a brutal parody of verbal communication, a "dialogue" of bodily parts in which a hand that cannot flourish is exchanged for two heads that cannot speak, all three returned to Titus by a "messenger." (32)

When words fail in *Titus Andronicus*, body parts become currency and misused language enables the cycles of violence the play has become infamous for. The inability to communicate plagues the play. Lawrence Danson writes:

> For this play, which could elicit an audience's sympathetic response, is one that presents to us the image of a world in which man's words go unheeded and his gestures unacknowledged, a world unresponsive to his cries, demands and prayers. The tragic world is a nightmare world; and in *Titus* the nightmare is that widely familiar one of the unutterable scream, the unattainable release from horror through outcry or gesture. (1)

When both gesture and outcry fail Titus, he resorts to drastic measures. In the end, he is faced with little other option than to pile bodies up on stage before taking his own life. This is the only way he can fathom getting revenge when the power of his words and traditions has all but disintegrated.

The "heroes" in *Titus* succeed by using the villains' predisposition for literal interpretation against them. Aaron takes his inspiration for Lavinia's mutilation from the myth of Philomela, reckoning that the act be carried out according to the myth, but adding that Lavinia's hands should also be removed. Then, like Aaron, Titus begins to literally interpret Ovid's

Metamorphoses, both enacting and changing the end of the myth to suit his needs in killing Lavinia, Tamora, and her two sons. He learns how to command these literal interpretations to his advantage, using the villains' weaknesses to ultimately defeat them. The living Andronicii declare that Aaron is to live out the rest of his short days buried up to the neck and forced to live in isolation with the knowledge that no one will heed his calls. Tamora and her sons' deaths are a permanent separation from the living. Command of language is power.

It is important to note that *Titus Andronicus* also begins with violence. At the opening of the play, Titus and his men return from battling the Goths and they almost immediately engage in a revenge killing disguised as a religious ritual. Lucius declares in Act One:

> Give us the proudest prisoner of the Goths,
> That we may hew his limbs and on a pile
> *Ad manes fratrum* sacrifice his flesh
> Before this earthly prison of their bones,
> That so the shadows be not unappeased,
> Nor we disturbed with prodigies on earth. (1.1.96-101)

This revenge killing is only thinly veiled by Lucius who calls it a spiritual exercise. Titus is quick to offer up Alarbus, the eldest of Tamora's sons. Despite Tamora's motherly pleadings, the disguised sacrifice ends with Alarbus's limbs "lopped" and his "entrails feed[ing] the sacrificing fire" (1.1.143-44). The escalation of violence continues from there, tit for tat, as the cycle of revenge throughout the play turns. While the ending of the play is still shocking (how could a mother forced to eat her own sons not be?), the audience is relatively prepared for it, desensitized by the violent acts that precede.

Violence and language in are inextricable in *Titus*. William W. Weber writes, "Inseparable from the play's pervasive violence is its equally dense foregrounding of intertextuality: source texts, not unlike characters' limbs, appear strewn throughout the drama" (699). Weber points to Ovid's *Metamorphoses* as Shakespeare's key source text for the violence that proliferates within the play. He claims, "Shakespeare makes sure that his audience knows the inspiration for the abominations on display" (699). Thus, as the violence ensues, texts are at the forefront of the audience's mind. *Language* has sparked this bloodshed, both authorially and during the action of the play. The characters are all but living out a corrupted myth. These on-stage reminders of Shakespeare's source texts also go to show that such violence has been ever-present--like the revenge of the play, violence repeats itself and only grows more bombastic as it is reciprocated.

The bodies on stage in *Titus* and these extreme acts of violence are constant sources of discomfort for the audience. Cynthia Marshall writes:

> For these reasons, it is interesting that the long history of spirited opposition to *Titus Andronicus* —as not truly Shakespearean, not worthy of admission to the canon— constitutes a kind of implicit censorship comparable to that mounted against pornography. For it is not simply the play's content that has offended: instead, its determined exposure of the vanishing line between the real and the representational causes profound discomfiture. The plight of critics who find their language infected by the play's characteristic tropes of bodily mutilation illustrates how *Titus Andronicus* deconstructs an opposition between words and action, drawing critics into its grasp. (113)

Marshall indicates here that, in *Titus*, there is no longer a well-defined space between word and action. *Titus* becomes dangerously literalized. While Marshall's explanation of almost pornographic scenes of violence, rape, and dismemberment as the cause for the audience's discomfort is accurate, these events stem from language.

III. Gender and Power in *Titus Andronicus*

In *Titus Andronicus*, as in South Africa, control of human bodies by the state is the means of its power. A regulated body is a body that can be contained. These issues of agency extend beyond race and make their way into gender, as well, as much of *Titus* centers on Tamora and Lavinia and their fates. The relationship between race, gender, and law (whether written or unwritten), complicates *Titus* and raises questions as to how representations of one gender's power over another (or lack thereof) reflect anxieties about unregulated bodies.

In the world of *Titus*, it is the female body that suffers most for sexual transgressions. It is worth noting that Lavinia's body is highly regulated by her male family members and Roman law. "That is another's lawful wife," Lavinia's uncle Lucius declares as Titus promises her to the Emperor (1.1.294). It is an argument over her marriage, and ultimately the ownership of her body, sexuality, and reproduction, that causes Titus to murder one of his sons, for being a "traitor" (1.1.283). This conflict over a woman's body, and how much agency she has over it, adds fuel to the fire of the cycles of revenge and violence throughout the play. Tamora's sexuality is a also constant point of tension throughout the play. Unlike Lavinia's her body Tamora's body is unregulated for a number of reasons. Her status as a mother makes her dangerous; it is because of her eldest son's wrongful death that she chooses to set off the cycle of revenge that ravages the rest of the play. Tamora's relationship with Saturninus crosses some

strange boundaries as well. She replies to his marriage proposal by saying:

> And here, in the sight of heaven, to Rome I swear
> If Saturnine advance the Queen of Goths
> She will be a handmaid to his desires,
> A loving nurse, a mother to his youth. (1.1.326-329)

As she steps into her role of empress, she steps into both the mother and lover roles to Saturninus. These troubling images of motherhood will continue to haunt the play in descriptions of holes as "swallowing womb" (2.3.239) and Tamora's eventual reconsumption of her children. Throughout the play, the boundaries of motherhood and motherly love are crossed and recrossed and become increasingly more treacherous.

However, Tamora's most transgressive relationship is, of course, with Aaron. Upon discovering Tamora's sexual relationship with Aaron, Bassianus declares that she has a "foul desire" for the Moor (2.3.79). Tamora's relationship with Aaron ultimately culminates in the birth of a child that her nurse deems a "devil" (4.2.63) and a "joyless, dismal, black, and sorrowful issue" (4.2.66). Tamora wishes to have the child killed, but Aaron refuses, asking his famous question, "is black so base a hue?" (4.2.71). Chiron immediately tells Aaron that he has "undone" (4.2.75) his mother by bringing this child into the world, and here we see Aaron finally separate from his Gothic masters and choose to act on behalf of his son.

Dorothea Kehler writes that Tamora perfectly fits the "lusty widow" stereotype that would have appeared so dangerous to a Renaissance audience because she is a known sexual being (having born children previously), but an "unrestrained one" since her sexual acts are no longer bound to one man, her husband (317). She also attributes Tamora's penchant for violence

to her widowhood, writing, "[n]ot only are widows Other in their independence and worldliness, but they may be murderous as well…[i]n *Titus Andronicus* the widow's sexuality is aligned with her murderousness in the person of Tamora as revenger" (318). Tamora's characterization is further made more complicated and dangerous by another Elizabethan trope, claims Kehler. She writes, "Saturninus's attraction to Tamora plays to the concern with the discrepancy between appearance and reality; Tamora, the lusty widow, becomes all the more alien when she is revealed as partaking of another Elizabethan convention, disturbing enough to rarely if ever be depicted as comic: the white devil" (Kehler 323). Tamora becomes not just a rogue sexual being, but also a deceiver of men. She disguises herself as a helper and oddly motherly caretaker for her younger husband, but uses her position of power to exact her revenge. Her body is an unregulated one—beyond control and thus dangerous to the men (and women) around her.

Titus Andronicus is a play deeply concerned with pits and holes and the way they connect to gender and concepts of womanhood. Bassianus and Titus's sons are killed in a pit in Act Two, Lavinia's tongueless mouth becomes a gaping hole, Tamora consumes her sons after birthing her bastard, and Aaron's fate is being buried alive. Marion Wynne-Davies claims that "[t]he pit in *Titus* functions as both a womb and a consuming mouth" (136). She goes on to state that:

> As the play attempts to repress female sexuality through rape, so it denies female speech when Lavinia has her tongue cut out. Tamora's unheeded plea for her sons is likewise a reminder of women's muted state. Yet it is through the 'consumption' of a pen that Lavinia regains the power of communication, and at the end of the play Tamora will literally eat her children. The play persistently empowers its female characters with a hard-won freedom of self-expression, only

to have it rebound in a final reassertion of male dominance. (136)

These images of dangerous pits and holes and mouths litter the play with anxieties about female sexuality and agency. Many critics have aligned these images with the concept of Tamora's dangerous motherhood. Marion Wynne-Davies writes in her essay, "[t]he 'swallowing womb' does carry the promise of death, but for men and not women. Its power is to castrate, not to madden" (136). It is Tamora's fierce maternal instinct to avenge Alarbus that drives the revenge plot of *Titus*.

Tamora is, by nature, characteristically a female revenger, which sets her apart from the other revengers in the play. Eugene M. Waith writes, "...Titus is a more successful character than Tamora, who is not always depicted as the woman obsessed by revenge. In the second act we find her more lustful that revengeful, while Aaron...becomes in a sense the projection of her revenge" (108). It is interesting then, that Aaron is both the object through which Tamora exercises her lust and her revenge. If Aaron is to be seen this way, Tamora's lust and vengeance become inextricable in him. Her "feminine wiles" place her in the position to utilize Aaron as a means to her ends until he ultimately rebels.

Tamora is not the only female in *Titus Andronicus* with a complicated position, however. As Bernice Harris states, "Lavinia's power is also related to her sexuality -- to her function as a "changing piece" (1.1.309), a function which is initially contingent on her virginity and later contingent on her marred marital chastity" (383). Lavinia, who in some instances serves as a foil to Tamora, also has varying degrees of agency. Carolyn Asp writes, "[i]nstead of having power

herself, Lavinia functions as an object to be used by powerful males within the Symbolic Order to cement alliances and maintain a surface of order" (336).[13] While some critics argue that Lavinia gains some amount of agency after her rape and mutilation, Asp claims that after her ordeal, "Lavinia embodies in a grotesque literal extreme the patriarchal wish that women remain silent and obedient to male commands and interpretations, without expressing desires of their own, subsumed under male goals and values" (340). According to Asp, Lavinia's rape only makes her more of a tool for the men of Rome as she comes to represent the patriarchal ideal. Bernice Harris makes a similar argument, stating:

> Indeed, Titus Andronicus illustrates a profound relationship between sexuality and the state. Shakespeare's Titus Andronicus [sic] is a play about circulations and exchanges of power; it is also a play which dramatizes relationships between representations of virginity, chastity and rape and constructions of masculine power. Both in sexual terms and in terms of exchange value, Lavinia is a "changing piece" (1.1.309), as she is called in this play; she is a means by which power is marked as masculine and is then transferred and circulated. (383)

Harris's reference to Eve Sedgwick later in her argument is entirely appropriate, as she draws on many of Sedgwick's concepts of the female body's place in masculine society. According to all these models, Lavinia is nothing more than an object, and, as she progresses from virgin to wife to victim, she has less agency than when the play began with her in her virginal state. Cynthia

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[13] Asp utilizes Jacques Lacan's definitions of Imaginary and Symbolic Orders. She asserts that Lavinia has a place within the Symbolic Order as a tool of the patriarchy and that Tamora functions in the Imaginary Order of maternity which gives her the position of an agent rather than an object (335).

Marshall even goes so far as to state that the male characters claim Lavinia's story and mutilation for themselves (108). In this sense, not even Lavinia's own experiences are safe from being shuffled into the realm of masculine currency. The characters in *Titus* try desperately to control or regulate bodies, either in their natural or mutilated state. After her rape and mutilation, Lavinia searches for ways to express herself. Eventually, she does this through texts by showing her family the story of Philomela in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and by writing "*Stuprum*--Chiron--Demetrius" (4.1.77) in the dirt. When words break down in *Titus*, bodies are used a forms of currency. Titus offers up his hand when words will not do to ransom his sons. As the bodies pile up, debts are both made and paid.

I would argue, then, that Lavinia is at least given some agency after her rape. Marion Wynne-Davies writes, "[w]hile provoking our repugnance, however, the play gradually appears to offer the audience a satisfying (only in that it is just) conclusion: when Lavinia participates in the revenge against Chiron and Demetrius" (132). While she never reclaims her voice and dies at the end of the play, Lavinia at least gets to be active in the deaths of her tormentors; and, while the brothers' final torment is the idea of her father, Lavinia's role and complicity should not be discounted.

IV. If Not "Why *Titus*?", Then What?

The violence in *Titus* is complicated by the characters committing these atrocities. The play's success in performance largely relies on the audience's ability to understand or relate to the characters and the situations in which they find themselves. Whether we as an audience are sympathetic to Aaron's plight or Tamora's maternal instincts, these characters are undeniably available for audience identification. Cynthia Marshall claims that "[t]he brilliance of *Titus*

Andronicus lies in the way it allows viewers to be scandalized and morally outraged by events portrayed on stage but also and at the same time to identify with characters who suffer and commit acts of horrific violence" (107). Identifying with a character such as Tamora or her sons is horrific in and of itself, and certainly no one pulls for them as he or she watches the play; however, again, Shakespeare holds up a mirror to the ugly parts of the self. Though it is far easier to relate to or sympathize with Lavinia, the other end of the spectrum cannot be ignored.

The action in *Titus Andronicus* would suggest, though, that the subversion of boundaries leads to chaos. When Roman becomes barbarian, when Goth becomes Roman, when human bodies are violated, and when systems of government fail to enact justice, *Titus*'s Rome crumbles under the weight of its own inadequacies. Old Rome falls with Titus, and, though the ending is tinged with sorrow and more violence, new Rome will be in the hands of his son, Lucius. What the new Rome will become, though, is unclear. The cycle of revenge has burned itself out, but the new Rome has been built upon violence. The violence that ended Titus's Rome can be interpreted as caused by the outsiders—the Goths and Aaron who brought the violence in and destroyed Rome from the inside.

Decades of critical research and close readings have led to many stimulating answers as to why *Titus Andronicus* is particularly appropriate for a South African audience. Its various themes constellize around race and its treatment within the play; thus it seems more beneficial to ask not "*why Titus?*", but "*how Titus*?".

CHAPTER 2

The Productions: Dieter Reible's 1970 Production of *Titus Andronicus* and Gregory Doran's 1995 Production of *Titus Andronicus*

I. How *Titus*?

Brian Cox, the man who played Titus during Deborah Warner's 1987 production of *Titus Andronicus*, writes that the play "examines the values by which we live" (188). He also states "*Titus Andronicus* has survived grudgingly for four centuries because of the effect on its audiences within any given historical context during those four centuries" (Cox 175). When Dieter Reible and Gregory Doran decided to produce *Titus Andronicus* in 1970 and 1995 respectively, they were aware of the cultural contexts in which it would be performed. I have already examined *why Titus* was appropriate for performance in South Africa, but this chapter will examine *how* the play was cast and staged, what the actors' and directors' intentions were, and how audiences reacted to the performances. My intention is to explore the various aspects of these productions and discuss their impacts. To do this, I will read the productions as "texts" themselves. W.B. Worthen, one of the foremost experts on performance theory, recounts in his book, *Shakespeare and the authority of performance*, the way Antonin Artaud "*reads*…bodies and their performance as a *text*" as he observes and writes about Balinese performers (2). Worthen also asserts that, "[e]ach Shakespeare performance is an independent *production* of the work, part of an emerging series of texts/performances rather than a restatement or return to a single source…rather than reproducing the work, stage performance produces it anew" (*Shakespeare and the authority of performance* 23-24). My goal here is not to argue "stage over page" or "page over stage," but rather to give these performances, as Worthen suggests, authority

on their own terms, in their own contexts, and with respect to the intentions of those behind the productions. James C. Bulman sums up my intentions: "[h]istoricists attempt to recreate authentic contexts for performances of a given play and thereby to gauge what the play has signified for its audiences at different times and in different cultures: in other words, they use performance history to discover what, and how, meanings are produced" (4).

Worthen also writes about discovering meaning in performance in his book *Shakespeare and the Force of Modern Performance*:

> I argue that dramatic performance is conditioned not only from within the theatre, requiring an understanding of the conventional performance practices of a given culture, but also from without: the institutions of performance arise in relation to social and cultural factors, other institutions which define the categories and meanings of performance. (1-2)

Social and cultural factors certainly defined the work of Reible and Doran. These cultural and social factors are what shaped Reible's and Dorans's intentions, whether those intentions were successfully realized or not. It was these factors that determined the ways in which the productions were cast and staged, and, because of these factors, both Reible and Doran chose either eclectic or modern-dress design for their productions. Worthen writes:

> The modern-dress and eclectic design typical of twentieth-century performance also assert the historicizing force of contemporary behavior, its ability to redeem Shakespeare's meanings from their historical moment, and preserve a historicizing tension between past styles of language and characterization and the theatrical elements of the present (design, props, acting style). Modern

> Shakespeare merely reciprocates the sense that the Shakespearean text is freighted with its past, a history that can be confronted onstage. (*Shakespeare and the Force of Modern Performance* 31)

Reible and Doran both confronted various histories on stage—not only Shakespeare's own history, but also the history of South Africa and the country in its contemporary moment. These aspects of Reible's and Doran's productions are both the most praised and most criticized. For Doran, the modern-dress aspect was the most important of his production. His choice to cast and dress the actors as modern South Africans and to set the play in South Africa was intended to give the play special relevance. Doran wanted to make the parallels between *Titus* and South Africa undeniably clear. Reible's production, on the other hand, was more eclectic. Rohan Quince describes the production:

> The play opened with Titus's triumphant return to Rome. At its head were carried "realistic crucified male nudes with barbed wire around their genitals" (Williams, *Star* 1 October 1970). Brecht-like headlines were projected during the blackouts between scenes. They were "a mixture of poetic and double meanings", said Reible, like "BLOOD HARVEST" near the end. Heavy rock music reinforced the parallels between then and now. (35)

Both Reible and Doran used set design, casting, and costuming to reinforce the parallels between *Titus* and South Africa. In this chapter, I will focus on the way these productions were designed and how they subsequently affected the audience. The intentions of Reible and Doran were both for protest and for confronting South Africa's violence and the trauma that comes from that violence. In both the case of Deiter Reible and Gregory Doran, their goals were not only to shock

(it is my belief that anyone who stages *Titus* has intent to shock), but were also to prompt the audience—particularly the white male audience—to look at themselves more critically and confront their own violence. Simply put, both Reible and Doran desired to hold a mirror up to the social realities present in South Africa—to open a door for the audience to step through if they could see past the gore, and while these intentions do not necessarily translate to success, they do create meaning.

II. Dieter Reible's 1970 Production of *Titus Andronicus*

Unfortunately, Dieter Reible's 1970 version of *Titus Andronicus* has not received much critical attention. Reible had Breyten Breytenbach translated the performance to Afrikaans and the show was held at the Hofmeyr Theater in Cape Town. *The Guardian* published a review of the performance in a piece titled "Bard Shocks Capetown." "Shocked" is the very word to describe the audience reactions that follow. *The Guardian* reports that "one young man in the audience fainted" and "[a]nother rushed out clutching his stomach" ("Bard Shocks Capetown" 417). The review also claims that South Africa's board of censors was "displeased with the play's sensualism and the birth of a devil child from a union between a blond queen and a black moor, who later exults in his blackness" ("Bard Shocks Capetown" 417). By this account, the audience was completely appalled by every aspect of the performance; however, *The Guardian* calls the production "magnificent" and wonders, "what can be done about a Shakespearean play, splendidly directed, mounted and acted, that drips violence, sadism, and sex all over the place?" ("Bard Shocks Capetown" 417-18).

In Rohan Quince's 1985 interview with Reible, when asked why *Titus Andronicus* was chosen for the production, Reible states:

> I thought it would be interesting for South African audiences: a black man gets involved in a love story with a white princess and they have a coloured kid. Of course, its brothers get terribly upset and try to kill the little 'bastard.' I thought this would be a good story for South Africans. (34)

Reible's reasons for staging this particular play were centered on race and the way the representation of race in *Titus* could resonate with South Africans. However, even Reible concedes that the part of the play that truly speaks to the South African experience is its violence. Quince recounts Reible's statement: "South Africa is a very violent society, but the violence is removed from the people in their nice houses. If there was a message, it was to confront white audiences, who are part of the very violent society, with a production which exposes the violence" (34). The goal then, of this production, presented in Afrikaans—the language of oppression—was to smack white audiences in the face and, as Quince writes, hold up "a mirror of their own violent society" (39). Reible certainly made good on his promise of violence—it sent white audiences fleeing for the bathroom, attempting to escape the bloodshed on stage.

There were, of course, dangers to this production. Aside from being heavily censored by the government, Reible's production was at risk for misinterpretation, especially the misinterpretation of the play's violence. If the white audience became uncomfortable, it would be relatively easy for them to attribute the violence in the play to Aaron or the Outsider Goths. It would not be easy for some to see themselves as part and privy to this violent society, as Reible states, "in their nice houses" (Quince 34).

One of the few explorations of the 1970 translation of *Titus Andronicus* is done in Benjamin Stephen Green's Master's thesis written at the University of Stellenbosch in 2012.

Green concludes that:

> Beyond the level of mere literature, however, we may also see that this translation served as a contribution to the anti-Apartheid movement, a contribution that may have been minor but which nevertheless helped to question the legitimacy, the premises and the prevalence of a vexed and ultimately doomed system of laws and government. This translation was more than just a skilful [sic] rendition of a classic English author. The issues raised by the text had immense import for the 1970 South African audience, just as they had for Shakespeare's audience roughly 400 years previously. So, on a societal and political level, my submission is that the translation was important and was successful. (260)

Green claims to look at the socio-political climate in which the translation of *Titus* was performed to reach his conclusions. Part of what made the performance successful, though, was its violence. According to Quince, it was also Reible's intention to show his audience themselves in the violent Romans of *Titus*. He writes that the production "attempted to confront Afrikaners with the brutality inherent in the apartheid system" and that "the establishment responded by misrecognizing the violence. Resisting a representation of themselves as another barbaric African tribe, Afrikaners attempted to deflect brutality onto the racial Other, perceiving savagery only in the black tribes of Africa" (Quince 8). By Quince's account, not only were Afrikaners unable to see themselves as violent, they were also unable to even see themselves as part of the tribal network of Africa. They refused to even associate themselves with the Other at all. Rather than see that they, of European ancestry, were also violent, they attributed all the violence in South Africa to the black tribes. Quince also suggests that there was a "usual white South

African tendency to perceive clearly the link between violence in Shakespeare's plays and violence in other parts of Africa, thereby deflecting the focus from the applicability to South Africa itself" (35). While the Afrikaners were perfectly willing to acknowledge the violence present in their society, they were unable to claim it as their own. Quince sums up these sentiments by stating:

> As one might expect, then, violence in Afrikaans Shakespeare productions was never interpreted by the Afrikaner establishment as interrogating the apartheid system, the great perpetrator of institutionalized violence in the country. Instead Afrikaners perceived the clear relevance to other societies, especially those in Black Africa, confirming their belief that violence is the inevitable concommitant [sic] of primitive blood. (39)

Ultimately, according to Quince, Reible was unsuccessful in his attempts to force white South Africans to realize their own barbarism. However, critics deemed the play a success, nonetheless. Quince even suggests this "success" was *because of* the Afrikaner tendency to separate themselves from the violence—they enjoyed the play so much because it reinforced their beliefs about race (39).

Green also refers to the translation of *Titus* by Breytenbach as "important" and "successful" (260), but perhaps it was a tactic that also backfired for Reible, despite his intentions. As Green states, "Afrikaans was the official language of the Apartheid regime" (67). So if it was Reible's goal to be political, why translate the play into the language of the oppressors? Green offers an answer as simple as the fact that Breytenbach is an Afrikaans poet. Trevor Noah's experience with language provides another answer as to why Reible's production

was translated into Afrikaans: "Maybe I didn't look like you, but if I spoke like you, I was you" (56). If Afrikaans was the language of apartheid, as Green has suggested, then Afrikaans makes sense. To begin a conversation with the oppressor, one must speak the language.

Walter Benjamin writes, that "[t]ranslation is a form" and that while "[i]t is evident that no translation, however good it may be, can have any significance as regards the original", "their translation marks their stage of continued life" (254). If translation is to be taken as a form and as something different from the original, then Breytenbach's translation and the performance of it should be read as part of *Titus*'s "continued life" (Benjamin 254) rather than as a comparison to the original. Pier Frassinelli even offers, "even at his most 'native', Shakespeare comes to us already translated" (57). Frassinelli claims this is because of (among other reasons) the nature of early modern English as being a "new linguistic medium", because of Shakespeare's penchant for making up his own words, because of loan words in the English language, and because of editors that introduce and footnote Shakespeare's work (59). This means that the Shakespeare we read today is not necessarily "authoritative". So then Breytenbach's translation becomes just as authoritative as the original.

Michael Neill also discusses the nature of translation:

> translation…is never a mechanical or even a purely linguistic process—a simple matter of replacing as accurately as possible one set of words with their nearest "equivalents" in another tongue. It is also…a matter of trading between cultures, between different ways of imagining the world, involving both diachronic shifts and delicate synchronic adjustments. (400)

He states that translation "has a much to do with changing places as with shifting speech, with

the crossing of seas as with the crossing of linguistic frontiers, and with the bridging of cultural divisions as with the interpretation of unfamiliar tongues" (Neill 402). Translation as the act of "bridging cultural divisions" (Neill 402) would have been important for Reible. Not only was translation necessary to breach the divide between British and Afrikaner, but it was also necessary to make clear to the Afrikaners that this violence was *theirs*—it was a production meant for them in their culture and context. As Quince suggests, though, perhaps translating *Titus* into Afrikaans was not even enough for the Afrikaners to see violence in themselves.

R.A. Foakes writes of *Titus*, "[v]irtue and honor are drained of meaning in a play that relishes cruelty" (54), but that "[i]f violence is natural to human beings, then we need to come to terms with this issue, and seek understanding from the stories and enduring works of literature that have dealt with it" (1). By all accounts, Reible's production of *Titus* was excessively violent. *The Sunday Times* reports that "[t]here was no set, just a white sheet on and around the stage drenched with gallons of fake blood" ("Dieter Reible…"). *The Guardian* states that "10 gallons of stage blood were imported from Germany" for the production ("Bard Shocks Capetown" 417). This excessive violence has not always been the case in successful productions of *Titus*. Brian Cox writes of the experience as Titus in 1987:

> I was aware, as I played the scene with the boys, that members of the audience were thrilled that I had them, thrilled as I gripped their heads to expose their throats, thrilled at the revenge…We had held back in the production from showing too much blood but here blood was spilled, unstintingly. To the horror, and to the delight, of the audience the blood of Demetrius and Chiron gushed into the bowl held between Lavinia's stumps and we moved into that final scene. (186-

7)

Cox's account, from almost twenty years after Reible's *Titus*, describes an audience more excited about violence than Reible's. The irony being that South Africa was arguably more violent than England at the time of the productions, but the English seemed far more desensitized to violence on stage. However, as Reible suggests, "South Africa is a very violent society, but the violence is removed from the people in their nice houses" (qtd. in Quince 34). This violence is something that white South Africans actively tried to avoid, and when confronted with it, they were horrified, perhaps by the realization that there was violence present in their worlds—so they rejected it as being from the systems they had created.

The other central focus of Reible's *Titus* was sex. Andrew Dickson writes, "Reible's Afrikaans production of *Titus Andronicus* was set in a fascist Roman state with clear contemporary echoes, and lingered—to the obvious discomfort of some critics—on the passionate love affair between Queen Tamora of the Goth and the black character Aaron" (314). *The Guardian* also cites "sex" ("Bard Shocks Capetown" 418) as one of the reasons that Reible's production was scandalous. *The Sunday Times* writes in Reible's obituary:

> Reible had a black man, Aaron the Moor (played by a white actor painted black because black actors were not allowed to perform with whites), fornicating on stage with a white woman, doggy style. The shock effect was particularly great because the play was in Afrikaans and the audience, on the first night at least, were mostly conservative Afrikaners who did not know what they were in for. ("Dieter Reible…")

Though the actor in the role of Aaron was in blackface, the message was still clear—a white

woman has an affair with a black man. This was, of course, illegal at the time due to the Immorality Act of 1927, and, as *The Sunday Times* suggests, this display on stage was shocking for Reible's conservative audience. The child Tamora produces with Aaron would be born a crime in the South Africa of 1970. Not only does the play involve a rape, it involves the unregulated and sexual female body, and not only does Tamora have an illicit affair with Aaron, she uses this relationship to gain power and to subvert the power of the Romans who Reible hoped his white audience would see themselves in. For black audiences, though, the production had a very different effect.

Black audience members were, by law, prevented from seeing the production during its run because of apartheid segregation laws. Because of this, Reible organized a preview show for the blacks involved backstage (Quince 35). By Quince's account, the black audience was enthralled. Rather than run for the bathrooms, members of this preview audience held their children up to the stage, screaming, when Aaron proclaimed he would "take [his own child] into the woods and turn him into a warrior" (35). The black audience members turned Aaron the Moor into a hero—someone who would take their children and transform them. His words become a battle cry for the black stagehands.

The actor portraying Aaron, though, was not black. Apartheid laws also prevented a black actor from appearing on stage with the rest of the white cast. However, Pascale Aebischer claims, "[w]hen, in 1970, Dieter Reible had directed *Titus Andronicus* at the Hofmeyr theatre (Cape Town) as a challenge to the Apartheid government's racial politics, he had significantly cast a white Afrikaans actor as Aaron, allowing for a reading of the part as a projection of racist stereotypes onto the black 'Other'" (113-4). Aebischer's statement suggests that Reible used the

law to his advantage. Something similar happened in Peter Brook's 1955 production. Brook's Aaron was also portrayed by a white man (Sir Anthony Quayle) in blackface. Alan Hughes writes, "[h]is voice was rich, African, almost accented. His eyes were round and prominent, his arms and legs long, his gait subtly black, joints loose, hands enormous: the palms and nails seemed pink. This was no white man in blackface: blackness was the centre of the man, alone in the white man's world" (41-3). If the same can be said for Reible's blackface Aaron, it puts race at the center of the play, as well. If his goal was to encourage "a projection of racist stereotypes onto the black 'Other'" (Aebischer 113-4), then putting a white man in control of a black body is one way of causing those stereotypes to be realized. Even though blackface was legally necessary, it still makes for a powerful image of a white man trying to inhabit a black body, causing chaos in a black body, and attempting to control a black body.

While certain aspects of Reible's production were unsuccessful—it was unable to force Afrikaners to realize their own violence—others were well received. His creative use of blackface, according to Aebischer, allowed Reible to highlight the stereotypes projected onto native Africans, and his use of Breytenbach's translation gives us a Shakespeare that attempts to "bridge cultural divisions" (Neill 402) and speak to a specifically South African audience, even if white audiences were deaf to it message. As Quince states, "[t]his controversial production resonated powerfully in the South African context, interrogating racist ideology and confronting white audiences with the institutionalized violence which underpinned the apartheid system" (36), even if the Afrikaners resisted attributing this violence to themselves.

III. Gregory Doran's 1995 Production of *Titus Andronicus*

While violence and sex were the hallmarks of Reible's *Titus*, the most important, and

most controversial, part of Gregory Doran's was his casting. On Thursday, October 13, 1994 (about five months after the first racially inclusive elections were held in South Africa), the first auditions for Antony Sher and Gregory Doran's *Titus Andronicus* were held in Cape Town (Sher and Doran 41). Interestingly the first auditions were for the parts of Chiron and Demetrius—but rather than Goths, the two brothers would be Coloured (Sher and Doran 42). Doran explains in the account of the production he and Sher penned:

> The play deals with issues of race and therefore we do need to be precise about the colour of actors we choose. Aaron has to be isolated in his blackness. Saturninus and Tamora have to be white, otherwise there would be no scandal when Tamora produces a black child (with Aaron). Nevertheless, since we know Tamora has a penchant for black men, her three other sons don't need to be white as well. (Sher and Doran 42)

While most of Doran's explanation makes sense—Aaron's necessary "isolation" and Tamora's whiteness—his explanation of the casting of Chiron and Demetrius is unpersuasive. Doran suggests that the brothers "don't need to be white as well," but bases this decision on Tamora's "penchant for black men" (Sher and Doran 42). However, if her child with Aaron is scandalous, how come the brothers, if imagined as bi-racial, are not? Of course, the necessity for inclusivity could be another reason for Doran's casting choice. Another is that the tri-level racial stratification of *Titus* closely mirrors those present in South Africa, and Doran's intent was to capitalize on the racial structures present in both South Africa and *Titus Andronicus*.

The Romans, steeped in tradition and honor, were cast as Boers[14] in Doran's production. The Goths, the barbaric enemies of the Romans, were cast as Coloureds, poor whites, and township dwellers. Aaron, the Moor, was cast as the only native African lead in the play. This casting represents the three legal races outlined by the Population Registration Act of 1950. Though Doran's *Titus* was staged after the end of apartheid, these three groups were still largely defined by their race because of apartheid laws designed to keep these racial groups separate. The cultural separation between the Romans, Goths, and Moor, who in the play are thrown into contact with each other, mirrors post-apartheid South Africa where, though the laws are off the books and racial groups are now allowed to intermarry and live side by side, race, which determined where one could live and work and whom one could associate with, remains the chief definer of culture.

Sher himself was to play Titus. Doran recounts that he envisioned Sher's first moments on stage, Titus's return to Rome, as Sher "coming back to re-salute [his] country" (Sher and Doran 38). Natalie Distiller writes that "Shakespeare's play becomes a vehicle for expressing Sher's personal journey, and South Africa becomes the backdrop against which this personal odyssey acquires meaning, by opposition" ("Tony's Will" 160). This even seems to be Doran and Sher's intent. Doran expresses his wish for Sher's triumphant return because Sher himself is a South African expatriate who left for England in 1968 at age 19, burned his South African passport, and spearheaded the cultural boycott of South Africa declared by the United Nations in 1968 (Sher and Doran 3). To Doran Sher's return would mirror Titus's, but with a difference.

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[14] Boer, translated literally means "farmer"; however, it is another name for Afrikaners, or South African whites of Dutch descent.

Both men reenter changed countries, countries that will fail or fly under new leadership. Doran's hope is that Sher's return will ultimately be more successful than Titus's. As for the other Andronici, Doran easily draws connections between the Romans and the Afrikaners: "We're thinking of playing the Andronici as Afrikaners. Titus's family are of old Roman stock, with a self-righteous belief in their own importance. Like the Afrikaner nation, they are God-fearing and pure-bred" (Sher and Doran 48). Their pick for Saturninus, "a South African John Malkovich" with a "wolfish quality" perfectly illustrates these ties between the Roman emperor and a fanatical "neo-Nazi" Afrikaner (Sher and Doran 49-51).

Sher's actual entrance as Titus was just as creative as earlier productions had been. Michael Billington of *The Guardian* recalls that Sher's Titus "Enter[ed] in a battered Jeep drawn by the captured Goths." Colin Butler writes, "[a]s with situations, so with characters: entrances can clarify them quickly" (27). This entrance paints the picture of Titus as the conqueror he is, but it also situates the play in the South Africa setting. Titus's entrance in Doran's production is similar to the way Titus entered in Deborah Warner's production in 1987. Titus in Warner's production is carried in on a ladder because Cox (Titus) "felt he should be at his highest point (quite literally) and that the boys, Tamora's boys, his victims, should be trussed up like pieces of meat, so that you didn't know, at first, that they were absolutely debased" (178). Sher's Titus's entrance has a similar effect. Both Tituses are elevated above the conquered Goths, situating them as the leads and as superior to their victims.

The other characters were perhaps not as easy to cast, and Aaron, according to Sher, was the most difficult. Eventually, Sher and Doran were introduced to Sello Maake ka Ncube, a veteran, award-winning, Sotho-speaking actor (Sher and Doran 54). He was chosen because,

"[h]e is beautiful. And not just physically. Something shines within him: a grace, a humility" (Sher and Doran 54). Sello Maake ka Ncube was deemed perfect for the role also partly because Sher and Doran had a new vision for Aaron. As the only black lead in the play, it was necessary that he appeal to both native Africans and whites—Ka Ncube was Doran's attempt at a sympathetic villain who may have caused mayhem, but upon who many injustices had be wrought. Doran's Aaron needed to be beautiful and graceful, layered and complicated, rather than flatly villainous, if whites were to see him as someone whose deeds can even begin to be understood.

Aaron's characterization in Doran's *Titus* was obviously important. Eldred Jones writes, "Shakespeare makes Aaron an artist in villainy. His smoothness during his devilish ministrations is quite shamelessly cynical" (151). Jones is onto something with his characterization of Aaron, at least for Doran. Aaron is portrayed in *Titus* as intelligent, enterprising, and opportunistic. Despite his culture and race, he has been absorbed (or at least tolerated) by the Goths, at least enough to learn from them but remain isolated enough to retain his free will and plans of his own. In this sense, his characterization provides an example of what a black man can become within these systems of power. Aaron is a lesson in learning from the oppressors while maintaining identity. However, Aaron is also problematic. Though he is intelligent, enterprising, and opportunistic, he is still the self-proclaimed villain: "Let fools do good, and fair men call for grace / Aaron will have a soul as black as his face" (3.1.203-204). He is *not* Othello, and it is difficult to be sympathetic to a man who encourages rape and murder, even if the audience is sympathetic to the conditions he endures because of his race.

While the Goth brothers were the first parts Sher and Doran auditioned, they were some

of the last to be cast. Eventually, Sher and Doran found their Coloured actors: Oscar Peterson, who is "dark-skinned" and Charlton George, who is "much lighter skinned, with remarkably blue eyes. In the bad old days, he could've found himself in one of those nightmare cases of race classification—Coloured or white?" (Sher and Doran 66-7). With the final additions of Peterson and George, Sher and Doran managed to fill out the three level racial hierarchy into the corresponding structures in *Titus*.

Along with his creative casting, the costuming of the actor's in Doran's *Titus* also points to his intention of making the production relevant to South Africa. Worthen writes, "Modern-dress has the advantage of immediacy" and that it is used "to bring elements of the play into more immediate dialogue with the present" (*Shakespeare and the authority of performance* 65). Rather than style the characters as Roman or Gothic or Moorish, Doran chose modern-dress for his actors, which, of course firmly situates the South African setting. Some have criticized Doran for this, suggesting that this caused him to fall into stereotyping. Worthen offers a corrective to this complaint:

> "[y]et while modern-dress potentially narrows the play's frame of reference, it also universalizes it—Shakespeare was really writing about *us* all along. Modern-dress production makes explicit the fact that all stage productions—hose-and-doublet or jeans-and-T-shirt—represent Shakespeare through the discourse of contemporary social attitudes, behaviors, and "assumptions"...Modern-dress productions universalize Shakespeare by claiming the plays' relevance to contemporary life… (*Shakespeare and the authority of performance* 65-6)

It seems that it was Doran's intent to both localize and universalize Shakespeare—to place *Titus*

in the South African conversation about race and violence. Charles Spencer, a writer for *The Daily Telegraph*, however, calls the production "misconceived" and states, "[a]nd throughout, this lackadaisical modern-dress performance fails to capture the required atmosphere of claustrophobic terror. Silly gimmicks are also much in evidence—Titus being pushed around in a supermarket trolley, for instance, and the evil emperor Saturninus delivering a panicky speech while sitting on the lavatory" (17). Spencer, potentially, sees modern-dress as cheapening the play and fails to see what the modern day aspects add to the production—a sentiment shared by many other critics. However, Spencer does praise one aspect of the modern-dress design: "Sher, however, is an excellent Titus. He has abandoned his tiresome look-at-me mannerisms and plays the character as a weary, battle-scarred Afrikaner in his military fatigues" (17). While this may be more of a comment meant to praise the shift in Sher's typical acting style, it does imply that Spencer appreciates at least that portion of the modern-dress performance. Spencer mentions that Titus is "battle-scarred" and dressed in military garb (17), which, of course, points to the militaristic nature of the Afrikaners—their violence is organized and governmental—and also makes Titus resemble Eugene Terre'Blanche, "the charismatic leader of the neo-Nazi Afrikaner Resistance Movement" (Sher and Doran 49), and the inspiration for his characterization.

Pascale Aebischer and Catherine Silverstone are among the critics for whom the modern-dress production fell flat. Silverstone writes:

> These South African visual signifiers were reinforced with the use of objects, such as masks and the scimitar shaped panga, or machete, that Aaron uses to murder the nurse, and the butterfly knives and okapi (folding knife) used by Chiron (Oscar Petersen) and Demitrius [sic] (Charlton George). According to the

> explanation offered in the National's Platform discussion, the knives were intended to allude to the culture of the Cape Flats, an area to the south-east of central Cape Town where "non-white" people were forced to relocate as a result of the 1950 Group Areas Act. Again the production resorted to racial stereotypes, recycling them without critique in performance. (34)

While it was Doran's intent to incorporate aspects of South African culture in the weaponry of Chiron, Demetrius, and Aaron, Silverstone claims that this failed because Doran did not consider the implications of this decision, and thus falls into stereotyping his characters.

Silverstone also discusses some of Doran's casting and characterization of the nurse and Young Lucius:

> The association between black people and servitude was reinforced by casting black actor Daphney Hlomuka as the nurse and, more pointedly still, by casting black actor Paulus Kuoape as the boy, Young Lucius: in the play text Titus's grandson is referred to as "boy" and in the context of the casting decision, the name "boy" worked to recast Young Lucius as Titus's boy, or servant…Here the production tracked straight back into a reiteration of racial stereotypes and inequalities that post-apartheid South Africa seeks to redress. (32)

Again Silverstone asserts that Doran relied on stereotypes for these characters by unnecessarily casting black actors in subservient roles. This is a particularly tone-deaf moment for Doran and it is clear that, while he may have wanted to add more black actors to his cast, he hardly thought of the potential audience response to the decision to have some of the only native actors in his production cast as a nurse and a servant.

Aebischer, on the other hand, describes the characterization of the Afrikaners:

> Antony Sher's Titus, played as a self-aggrandising, fair-haired Afrikaner general, and Jennifer Woodburne's strikingly blonde, arrogant, upper-class Lavinia (modelled, as in Taymor's film, on the inaccessible icon of Grace Kelly) only seemed to acquire humanity once they had been maimed. The lengths dark-haired Sher and Woodburne had to go to in order to bleach their hair for their roles speak volumes about the perceived need to distance them from the unsympathetic characters they were portraying. (114)

Aebischer claims that Titus and Lavinia were "bleached…into…'Other[s]'" (114). This "Othering" was potentially Doran's intention—the Afrikaners were to be the stark opposite of Aaron's blackness. It seems altogether reasonable that Sher and Woodburne would want to distance themselves from their characters, as Doran and Sher claim they were based on a "neo-Nazi" (Sher and Doran 49) Afrikaner and his "Afrikaner princess" (Sher and Doran 50).

Not all critics were opposed to the Doran's characterizations, though. Billington writes:

> The parallels [between *Titus* and South Africa], of course, are not exact: although race is an element in Shakespeare's play, it is hardly the key theme. But it is a work about violence, anarchy and stoicism in the face of unspeakable cruelty. And it does make a kind of sense for the Roman ruling elite to be seen as fractious Afrikaners, the captive Goths to be invading guerrilla forces and Aaron to be less an incorrigible black villain than a man driven to blood and revenge by an amoral society.

Here Billington praises the casting and suggests that this violence also plays a part in it: the types

of violence assigned to each group in *Titus* correspond with violence that was stereotypical of the groups that were cast as the Romans, Goths, and Moor.

Though violence does not seem to have been the central focus for Doran's *Titus* as it was for Reible's production, it is unavoidable as a theme in the play. Natalie Distiller puts the kind of violence expressed in *Titus* under the heading of "boundary violations" ("On Being Human" 35). She writes:

> *Titus* enacts boundary violations on every level: of classical precedent, of bodily integrity, of its exploration of the effects of inadequate state structures unable to deliver justice, of the line between madness and sanity in a world where injustice is uncontainable by either human or divine structures. Concerns with the uncontainability of violence, and with trauma's ability to seep from generation to generation, are echoed throughout the work. (Distiller, "On Being Human" 35)

Distiller's list of themes explains further how *Titus* works with a South African audience. She claims that the play outlines "the effects of inadequate state structures unable to deliver justice" (Distiller, "On Being Human" 35). Tamora, Titus, and Aaron all seek some form of justice for their very real slights, and end up taking matters into their own hands as Saturninus and the Roman state fail to deliver this justice. Doran seems to have capitalized on these themes when producing his *Titus*, as part of his production focuses on vigilante justice. In Doran's production, the scene of the Goths' eventual turn against Aaron was staged in a form of especially violent South African vigilante justice: the township killings.

Doran's version of the confession and near death of Aaron takes on new meaning once one understands what township killings are. A common form of black-on-black vigilante justice,

township killings involve a procedure called "necklacing." Lynda Schuster describes necklacing in her book, *A Burning Hunger: One Family's Struggle Against Apartheid*:

> 'Necklacing' represented the worst of the excesses committed in the name of the uprising. This was a particularly gruesome form of mob justice, reserved for those thought to be government collaborators, informers and black policemen. The executioners would force a car tyre over the head and around the arms of the suspect, drench it in petrol, then set it alight. Immobilized, the victim burned to death. (208)

Necklacing was considered for Aaron in Doran's version; however, he claims that he suggested they "continue with the hanging" (Sher and Doran 174). Michael Friedman and Alan Dessen write of this choice:

> Since the threatened violence was interracial, Doran pictured it within an American, rather than a South African context, which would have suggested the necklacing...However, the theatrical setting itself did evoke the township executions of the 1980's and 1990's; the stage was 'littered with old tyres and petrol cans, suggestive of ritual killings by "burning necklaces"' (Coveney, Gregory, 11). (185-86)

In this instance, Aaron has been betrayed by his comrades, so it is fitting that the scene was staged to express a common form of black-on-black violence within South Africa, even if Doran ultimately chose hanging over necklacing. Even if necklacing was merely alluded to in Doran's Titus, its implications are many. Lusaka Distelheim writes for *The Sunday Times* in 1986 that, "[t]he African National Congress is openly backing the execution of blacks who 'collaborate'

with the South African government and its leaders, for the first time, have publicly condoned the practice of 'necklacing'." The ANC's platform was and is one of African nationalism—it called for South Africa to be returned to native rule. According to Glenn Frankel of *The Washington Post*, "Winnie Mandela, wife of imprisoned ANC leader Nelson Mandela, reportedly told a gathering of black mourners at a funeral in April [1986], "With our boxes of matches and our necklaces, we shall liberate this country."" The party, now the governing party of South Africa openly endorsed the vigilante execution of those it deemed traitors to its own people, believing that there was no room for redemption for blacks working with or for the white minority government.

Necklacing is also highly political in another way. Frankel writes, in 1986, that:

> For both the government and its opponents, the question of what is officially called "black-on-black" violence has become a crucial propaganda issue, and the fiery necklace its most potent and troubling symbol. The deaths fuel Pretoria's assertion that South Africa's unrest is no longer a conflict between a white-minority government and a disenfranchised black majority, but a war among blacks themselves. Each black-on-black death is cited as evidence that blacks are not ready to govern each other, let alone whites, and furthers Pretoria's claim that it is struggling to resist not legitimate black aspirations but a faceless, barbaric mob that would trample western values and wreak havoc on whites if it ever came to power.

Necklacing, in turn, became something that was used against the ANC by supporters of apartheid. As Frankel suggests, it was used to make the argument that blacks were underserving

to rule. Perhaps then this is another reason Doran chose hanging over necklacing—hanging does more in the way of showing the barbarism of whites toward blacks since it recalls lynchings in the American South. Doran's choice of hanging over necklacing ultimately reinforces the fact the Aaron was not a Goth. Since necklacing is a form of black-on-black violence, necklacing Aaron would imply that he is a member of the Goth community. As Michael Friedman and Alan Dessen suggest, the hanging (which is typically interracial in its American context) marks him as an outsider, even among the Goths. But including the tires and gasoline cans on stage invites the audience to see Aaron as a traitor, nevertheless. The juxtaposition of these two forms of execution fully ostracizes Aaron.

Silverstone suggests that the violence in Doran's production was resisted in much the same way as it was in Reible's:

> Doran and Sher used the play's acts of violence as a way of negotiating and attempting to communicate the effects of historical and contemporary violence, especially in South Africa, situating the production as participating in South Africa's newly established project of reconciliation following the 1994 elections. In their attempts to engage with traumatic experiences in rehearsal and performance Doran and Sher's work performs exclusions and marginalisations of its own, and the "trauma work" that they propose for South Africa is, for the most part, resisted by local audiences. (27)

This resistance, Silverstone suggests, was due to the stereotyping of the characters and the actors' failure to represent trauma in a way that was inclusive of all the voices of South Africa:

> While the production worked to acknowledge the traumatic effects of violent

> events and histories, it often failed to acknowledge the terms of its engagement, instead resorting to clichés about Shakespeare's relevance. In so doing the production and its documentation performed its own marginalisations and exclusions, working to generalise the experiences of South Africans in relation to violence, especially that perpetrated by apartheid. (53-4)

According to Silverstone, though Doran's intent was to represent the different groups in South Africa, the production failed to adequately represent their various experiences with trauma and violence, instead falling into recycled tropes and caricatures. More than a few critics share Silverstone's sentiments and, overall, the performance was met with mixed critical and commercial response.

Reviewer Michael Coveney writes "Gregory Doran's production for the Market Theatre of Johannesburg...is wholly successful in its new setting; an emergent state in a state of emergency" (11). He attributes this success to the staging and the actors—particularly Sher as *Titus*. However, Catherine Silverstone, Charles Spencer, Adele Seeff, and other critics claim that Doran's production was largely unsuccessful for similar reasons—the use of stereotypes and the fact that they felt Doran was too aggressive about making *Titus* relevant to a South African audience.

Adele Seeff claims that white and black audiences had vastly different responses to the production. Seeff writes that the white audience was possibly ambivalent about, or even openly opposed to, attending the play because of Antony Sher's role in the 1968 Cultural Boycott (4). She claims that his fellow white South Africans were quick to bitterness about Sher's abandonment of his homeland and the fact that he criticized South Africa from afar during his

time in the United Kingdom. There seem to have been many outcries of "Who does he think he is?" (Seeff 4). Seeff further claims that Sher's involvement in the production, along with some of Doran's creative choices, potentially caused a rift between South Africa's two white racial groups. She writes that rather than a homecoming, "[Sher] found himself instead speaking in the language of the metropolitan center to an audience, in this instance, engaged in rejecting the 'privilege' of Britishness in this ambiguous post-colonial moment" (Seeff 4).

According to Seeff, black audiences had a more positive response to Doran's production. She writes:

> They commented on the action throughout, shouting at the characters on stage. Their identification with Aaron was disrupted only at the moment when he chopped off Titus's hand, but they shrieked their solidarity with him at "Tell the empress from me I am of age / To keep mine own, excuse it how she can" (4.2.106-107). (Seeff 4)

Based on this account, black audiences only distanced themselves from Aaron once he becomes violent—once he enacts the lessons of his masters. It is significant that the moment they disassociate themselves from Aaron is the moment he cons Titus out of his hand. At that moment in the play, while Aaron is still eloquent and intelligent, he has become just as tricky and slippery as the Romans. Seeff indicates that while white audiences may have failed to see themselves—their own violence—in the face of the Romans, black audiences distanced themselves from Aaron as he becomes *like* a Roman.

Despite the positive response of black audiences, Seeff suggests that the casting of the Goths was not well executed by Doran. She claims, "By casting the Goths as tsotsitaal[15] speakers, Doran played on all the fears sparked by the transition to a "New South Africa" and ensured that the audience would imagine its most dystopic dimensions" (Seeff 4). According to Seeff, Doran's vision did nothing to help the image of non-white South Africans. While the white audience became anxious over their views of other whites, it is within reason that the production also caused anxiety over the role of blacks in the creation of the "New South Africa." Casting Coloureds and tsotsis as the barbarous Goths implies inherently negative imagery of the townships and non-white South African cultural groups.

Seeff also claims that Doran's production raised larger questions about national identity in South Africa. She writes that, "at this moment of transition to a democratic black regime," the production raised "anxieties about national identity formation" (Seeff 4). When this larger question is taken into account, one sees how this performance of *Titus* could produce anxieties about national identity. At the time of the 1995 production, South Africa was attempting to distance itself from a national identity that had for so long been dictated by how national policy and culture dealt with concepts of race and racial identities. Race and nation had been inextricably bound for South Africans. While it was beginning its journey to become the "Rainbow Nation," South Africa witnessed *Titus* reveal the difficulties of integration and relationships between different groups. Not only that, but Seeff also attributes the play's

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[15] Tsotsitaal is considered an Afrikaans creole. It is a blend of African and South African languages and is mostly spoken in the townships. By some accounts, it began as a criminal, or at least secretive language that could loosely be compared to Cockney Rhyming Slang. It was originally meant to be a kind of code, but is now spoken in pockets of the South African population as any other creole.

influence on some of these anxieties about national identity to Doran's casting of the Romans as Boers (4). According to her article, this move incited centuries-old animosities between Dutch-descended and English-descended South Africans—two groups which had long struggled to keep their identities separate. According to Seeff, it is because of *Titus*'s handling of Roman trauma (both within and outside Rome), that the response to Doran's production was so controversial. These old wounds, between Dutch and English, black and white, and black and black, were ripped open as the audience witnessed the disintegration of Rome on stage. Perhaps then they were able to see themselves in the characters on stage. Seeff states "in the particular case of Doran-Sher production of *Titus Andronicus* at the Market Theatre, only one of many possible Shakespeares would have been acceptable. The Shakespeare that audiences were offered was not" (4).

Michael Kustow, a reviewer for the *Sunday Times*, claims that even if white audiences saw themselves on stage, it was not a flattering image. As Seeff previously claimed, white audiences were particularly disappointed with Sher's involvement in the production and some of them were all the more disappointed when they saw him in action. Kustow states:

> By performing the play in indigenous speech . . . Sher and Doran have confronted deep cultural preconceptions in their white audiences. A rich-looking man behind me hearing me speak English-English, butts in and angrily asks why Sher is playing Titus with a broad Afrikaans accent. I say we don't know what Elizabethan English sounded like, that it was not like "refined" English now, but that it was close to its own audience's speech. My neighbour is unimpressed. "I think they're trying to make fools of us," he growls. . . . There is a great knot of

> post-colonial cultural reflexes in all this. After years of cultural isolation, it is not surprising that South African whites should want to make up for what they have been deprived of: well-spoken English versions of the Bard…[b]ut Sher and his colleagues have tried for something more dangerous... (14)

The audience member behind Kustow, instead of being impressed that Shakespeare was being spoken with a heavy Afrikaans accent, or feeling that he can relate to Titus more because of their similar ways of speaking, is offended. He assumes, quite wrongly, I think, that Doran and Sher intended to poke fun at Afrikaners. This is obviously unhelpful to the tensions between the Dutch-descended and English-descended South African whites and potentially sparked more of this vitriol toward the British and Sher the expat.

While the realness of the Afrikaners was lacking for many audiences, the portrayal of Aaron garnered critical and commercial acclaim. Kustow, like other critics, has observed that Aaron, and the casting of Aaron, deserves praise:

> But it is through the reinterpretation of Aaron the Moor, casually vilified for his black skin and soul by everybody in the play, that this production strikes its shrewdest notes. Played by Sello Maake...this Aaron is no longer the malevolent villain of tradition, but a despised and taunted outsider, good enough for dirty tricks, learning fast the villainy of his masters. But when he has a child with the empress Tamora, he refuses to let her thugs kill it. 'I am of age to keep my own.' he cries, clutching his baby son to his chest. Next to me, a young black man in a business suit yells approval of Aaron's affirmation. No cultural obstacles for this spectator. (14)

Despite his obvious villainy, Doran's Aaron resonated with black audiences who clearly saw themselves in him as someone who was, at the start, made into a villain because of his skin and outsider status, but, despite his eventual demise, learns to keep up with the barbarism of his oppressors and uses it against them to form his own revenge.

Another point of controversy has been Doran's textual reworking of one scene in particular. Distiller describes this rewrite:

> By cutting and pasting, Marcus is given a final, reconciliatory word with which to close the play: 'O let me teach you how to knit again / This scattered corn into one mutual sheaf…' In the 'Synopsis' to the Market Theatre programme we are told that the play ends with 'Marcus…consider[ing] how to begin healing the wounds of a society devastated by violence and atrocity'. This is an obvious attempt to find parallels between the play and newly post-apartheid South Africa. There is no reason why a play by Shakespeare is the most appropriate vehicle for a statement on reconciliation. As the shifting of the speech from 5.3 to the end of the play suggests, Doran and Sher went out of their way, and the play's, to make this point. ("Tony's Will" 160)

Distiller fails to acknowledge that rewritings such as this are common in modern productions of Shakespeare, and that what she refers to as Doran and Sher going "out of their way, and the play's, to make this point" ("Tony's Will" 160), could be seen as an attempt to highlight the theme of reconciliation. Billington even praises the production for this aspect, writing, "[b]y textual fiddling, Doran even manages to end the play with Marcus Andronicus's conciliatory plea "to knit again this scattered corn into one mutual sheaf"." What Distiller determines is

shameless reworking of the play to match an agenda, Billington sees as an appropriate way to end the play on the theme of reconciliation rather than desolation and grief. Distiller refuses to separate the performance from the "original" text of the play. However, Leah Marcus asks us to think:

> What if, rather than flowing effortlessly and magically from Shakespeare's mind onto the unalterable fixity of paper, the plays were from the beginning provisional, amenable to alterations by the playwright or others, coming to exist over time in a number of versions, all related, but none of them an original in the pristine sense promised by Heminge and Condell? (44)

If we reframe the way we think of Shakespearean texts, as Marcus suggests, then the play is given authority on its own terms and Doran's decision to move Marcus's speech to the end of the play can cause the performance to be read as a separate version of *Titus*, or as an *interpretation* of *Titus*, that, rather than misconstruing the meaning of the play, reveals reconciliation as a meaning because of Doran's interpretation.

Billington claims that Doran's production's "great virtue is that it is anything but a pale imitation of British Shakespeare. It puts the play into a specifically South African context and, even though the historical fit is not perfect, it confirms Titus's status as Shakespeare's first masterwork." According to Silverstone, Seeff, and others, the problem with Doran's production was his casting; however, I argue that, at its core, Doran's casting is representative of the tri-level racial stratification in South Africa. Though the execution of this intent many have fallen flat, the attempt to be inclusive was made, and though Doran may have inadvertently fallen into portraying his characters as unsympathetic stereotypes, it was his intent to give *Titus* meaning in

a South African context. Whether the overall impact of Doran's production was positive or negative, I believe that it sparked necessary conversation, and even conflict, about the budding identity of the New South Africa. Doran and Sher clearly had a vision, though it may have been clouded by "post-colonial cultural reflexes" as Kustow puts it (14), it was hopeful. Perhaps Doran's hope for Sher's triumphant return to his homeland may not have gone as planned, but their contribution to the appropriation and globalization of Shakespeare has not gone unnoticed.

CONCLUSION: What Next?

Dieter Reible's 1970 version of *Titus* was declared "the bloodiest, most graphically violent and controversial play ever seen in South Africa" ("Dieter Reible…"). Then, Gregory Doran decided to direct the same play twenty-five years later. Both versions showcased the violence and racial tension present in South Africa. It seems that little had changed in the twenty-five years between the productions despite the fall of apartheid.

Scenes from *Titus* were performed in South Africa again in 2014, almost twenty years after Doran's production. This time, they were in response to the sexual violence that still exists in South Africa today (Saunders). A travelling group of multinational student actors, under the direction of Jeffrey Sichel, chose *Titus* to address the violence present in many countries around the world today (Saunders). Kiroshan Naidoo, the actor who played Lavinia, stated that "theatre has often served the means to be a mirror that is reflective of society. I feel this play does that in a blunt and gruesome way, showing what is happening in South Africa today" (Saunders). Naidoo's statement, though from 2014, could be applied to any of the performances of *Titus* discussed at length in this thesis. *Titus* is especially appropriate for South African performance—as is shown time and time again. Its violence and themes of race, gender, language, and identity resonate with South African society both during and after apartheid.

As a result of tensions lasting from the apartheid era, South Africa is still considered one of the most homicidal countries in the world. According to the South African Police Service, in 2015/16 murders had been on the rise since 2011 (15). Sexual violence, while not on the rise, is still immensely high. The Rape Crisis Cape Town Trust reports that in 2014/15, there were 53,617 reported cases of sexual offenses and that there could be as many as 482,000 actual cases

("Prevalence"). The Trust also claims "researchers have found that twelve times more women are raped and then murdered in South Africa every year than in the United States. A recent national mortuary-based study concluded that in South Africa a woman is killed every six hours by an intimate partner…" ("Prevalence"). These are alarming numbers and violence, it seems, is still an unfortunate norm for many South Africans. This violence, or at least fear of violence, in South Africa is still racially charged. Gary Kynoch writes, "the Victims of Crime Survey by Statistics South Africa, which was last published in September 2012, indicated that white South Africans were more afraid [of becoming victims of violent crime] than their black counterparts despite a lower rate of victimisation" (428) and that "for many whites, black men remain the threatening other" (430).

Even though South Africa is now called the "Rainbow Nation", the scars of apartheid inequality run deep. Poverty rates and unemployment rates are still high—Statistics South Africa reports that the unemployment rate is almost thirty percent ("Work & Labour Force"). Patrick McGroarty writes in 2013 that "[a] quarter of the majority black workforce [was] unemployed." McGroarty catalogues some of the ways young black South Africans have to survive: "Sello Nthinya, 21 years old, makes a few dollars a day guarding cars and as a hired gardener. Twenty-two-year-old Daniel Simango's [sic] couldn't afford college, so he turned a hobby—playing his CD collection at parties—into a sporadic vocation. Frank Masote, 22 years old, makes $20 a month stocking a neighborhood bar."

Access to education and protests over language and language policy still affect South Africans. In 2015 students at Stellenbosch University protested the use of Afrikaans as the instructional language of the university. These protests were part of "a movement to

"decolonise" higher education" ("South Africa's Stellenbosch University") and these efforts were successful—in the same year, the university made the switch to English. The *BBC* writes that "[d]ropping Afrikaans means that, psychologically and symbolically, the walls of apartheid are still crumbling 21 years after racial segregation was officially removed from the statute books" ("South Africa's Stellenbosch University"). Though the students were victorious in changing the instructional language at Stellenbosch, a college education is unobtainable for many South Africans. In April 2017 Seth Herschkowitz states that the protests over rising rates of school fees continues in South Africa and gives the account of one student, writing ""[t]he increase in University fees is like adding petrol to a fire," Makgata continued. His fees for university total around 100,000 Rand (7,296 dollars) per year—more than his entire family makes." Makgata's story is not unique, and in 2015, South African President Jacob Zuma required that all universities freeze fees for the next year. However, many say that this effort was both too little and too late (Herschkowitz).

As for Shakespeare's legacy in South Africa: he is just as present today as he was when British colonists first brought him to South Africa. Founded in 2007, the Shakespeare Schools Festival in South Africa is an organization aimed at improving language and social skills through the performing arts ("About Us"). This organization allows students to perform Shakespeare's work in professional theaters in South Africa—the students select from twenty-one plays[16] and then the Shakespeare Schools Festival hosts workshops for the student actors ("How It Works"). Versions of *Macbeth* and *Othello* remain popular in professional performance in South Africa, as

[16] Unfortunately, *Titus* is not among the choices.

does *Julius Caesar*, one of the earliest of Shakespeare's work to be beloved there. In September 2017, there will be an all-female, multilingual version called *Julius Kesara* at the Artscape Theater in Cape Town ("Stage and screen"). Decades after Sol Plaatje and Dieter Reible, South Africa continues to adapt and transform Shakespeare's narratives into performances that reflect the ever-changing social landscape of the "Rainbow Nation." Reible's and Doran's productions of *Titus* are two contributions to the Bard's legacy that both attempted to reflect the society in which they were performed and expose it for its violence and injustice. While these productions were met with varying degrees of success, they added *Titus* to the conversation about Shakespeare in South Africa.

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