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WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S THE MOST LAMENTABLE ROMAN
TRAGEDY OF TITUS ANDRONICUS.

The Ohio State University, Ph.D., 1974
Theater

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"VICTORIOUS IN THY MOURNING WEEDS": A STUDY OF
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S
THE MOST LAMENTABLE ROMAN TRAGEDY OF TITUS ANDRONICUS

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By
Daniel Ervinn Scuro, A.B., M. Ed.

* * * * *

The Ohio State University
1974

Reading Committee:        Approved by
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John A. Walker

Department of Theatre
DEDICATION

To my father and mother.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study originated in 1969 in the International Seminar of the Department of Theatre at The Ohio State University. Most of the early research for the study was completed in London and at Stratford-on-Avon under the sponsorship of The Ohio State University. I am especially grateful to Professor John Morrow who introduced me to the dissertation possibilities of Titus Andronicus and to Professor John Walker who encouraged and permitted me to produce the play in the Student Laboratory Theatre at The Ohio State University. Many of the ideas expressed in this dissertation were tested in that production.

I would be remiss if I did not thank both Professors John Walker and George Crepeau for their services on the Reading Committee and their suggestions to improve the study. To other friends and colleagues I owe a special thanks for assistance in obtaining materials and facilitating the completion of this dissertation: to Sarah Doyle, who assisted me in the logistics of writing a dissertation in absentia; to Albert and Joan Harris, who gave much time and advice in the early drafts; and to William Zumbar, who lent important historical insights and editorial assistance. To David and Judy Voyles I owe more than I can express for their support.
and help during the past six years. They were actually
the first to become involved in my pursuit of a doctorate,
and it is fitting that they assisted in preparing the final
version for presentation to the Graduate School.

Finally, I wish to acknowledge the invaluable help
of my adviser, Professor Donald Glancy. His faith in the
study has been inspirational and his dedication to the
completion of the work has exceeded professional obligation.
He bestowed scholarly refinement and editorial discipline
at every turn. Professor Glancy is one of those very special
persons who can be called "teacher."
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INTRODUCTION

No play of William Shakespeare's has generated more unfavorable criticism than The Most Lamentable Roman Tragedy of Titus Andronicus. Its scenes of violence and bloodshed have been called shocking, disgusting, or ludicrous; its purple patches of poetry have been dismissed as having been written by some inferior poet and then doctored by Shakespeare. The characterization has been labeled melodramatic; and the structure, disorganized and chaotic. Edward Ravenscroft called the play "a heap of rubbish."\(^1\) Coleridge said that it was "obviously intended to excite vulgar audiences by its scenes of blood and terror--to our ears shocking and disgusting,"\(^2\) and Dover Wilson called it a "broken-down cart, laden with bleeding corpses from an Elizabethan scaffold."\(^3\) In many cases aesthetic snobbery rather than judicious criticism has molded the generally negative response to Titus. In fact, most scholarship has avoided a thorough investigation of the play divorced from questions concerning its authorship, date of composition, or place in the Shakespearean canon. The body of

\(^1\)Edward Ravenscroft, Titus Andronicus or the Rape of Lavinia (1687), sig. A2.


criticism that has seriously investigated the play as a legitimate theatrical document is limited in both size and scope.

PREVIOUS SCHOLARSHIP

John W. Cunliffe (The Influence of Seneca on Elizabethan Tragedy, 1893) saw the play as a kind of Senecan potboiler in form and content. M. W. MacCallum dismissed the play with one sentence in Shakespeare's Roman Plays (1925); G. Wilson Knight did not even mention the title in The Imperial Theme (1931). Interest in the play increased in 1936 with the publication of the facsimile of the 1594 quarto that had been discovered in Sweden in 1904. Howard Baker (Induction to Tragedy, 1939) proposed the thesis that Titus might be more than just a revenge tragedy, but his study did little more than minimize the argument for Senecan influence on the play. F. T. Bowers opened the door to innovative criticism by concluding in Elizabethan Revenge Tragedy (1940) that Titus must be an experimental play. Nevertheless, he did not remove the play from the catalogue of revenge tragedies.

Probably no recent event prompted more interest in and discussion about Titus than the 1955 Peter Brook production at Stratford; however, the resulting furor produced fewer than a dozen significant periodical articles. Both Mr. Brook's promptscript and the aformentioned articles have contributed important information to this study, but none of them did more than verify the theatrical worth of the play as a revenge tragedy.
tragedy. Indeed, Brook edited the text in such a manner that
the revenge motivation is exaggerated far beyond that expressed
in the original poetry. The great success of Brook's production
and the fascinating articles that followed hard upon it have
prompted two important questions: if a single production,
based on a manipulated script of such a dishonored play, could
so astound the theatrical and critical world, what potential
might be inherent in the untouched text? and is there possible
a new or different critical approach to Titus Andronicus?

Following the burst of critical activity surrounding
the 1955 production, little more original work has been done
on the play. In 1963, Derek Traversi failed to mention Titus
in The Roman Plays. Since that date three dissertations have
explored various problems related to Titus. In 1966, Frank
Haggard of the University of Kansas completed a study of the
printing of the play. At the University of Oregon in 1969,
Michael Payne devoted one chapter of a short dissertation to
Titus. That one-hundred-and-ten-page paper concerned itself
with irony in Shakespeare's Roman plays. The most significant
study has been that of Joseph Kramer of Princeton. Following
in the footsteps of F. T. Bowers, Kramer treated the play as a
revenge tragedy; however, he concentrated his study primarily
on linguistics and symbolism in the characterization.

Apart from Mr. Kramer's "The Revengeful City" (1965),
none of the above-mentioned works has viewed Titus through
the eyes of the theatre practitioner; nor has there been a
complete textual analysis of the play from any point of view.
All studies have been piecemeal or selective in the choice of emphasis on textual elements supporting the revenge tragedy argument. In fact, a more recent study by Jeffrey Schwamberger of The Ohio State University analyzes the revenge elements in Titus in relation to Aristotelian critical theory. Despite obvious lapses into derivative scholarship and a tendency to be overly concerned with the nature and function of the revenge tragedy, the above scholars are not to be dismissed lightly. They have securely established Titus, with its Senecan, Ovidian, and Euripidean influences, among the ranks of the best revenge plays in the tradition of Kyd, Marston, and Marlowe.

PURPOSE, SIGNIFICANCE, AND THRUST OF DISSERTATION

It is not the intention of this study to disprove or to set aside almost one hundred years of scholarly work; nor is it the intention of this study to be merely argumentative. Rather, a major purpose of this dissertation is to approach Titus with the more tolerant hypothesis that the play may be more aesthetically pleasing and theatrically viable than heretofore acknowledged. Since Titus deals with Roman types, Roman ideals and Roman socio-political constructs rather than with actual historical particulars of the Roman world, it cannot be grouped with Coriolanus, Julius Caesar, or Anthony and Cleopatra. Titus is and is not a Roman play. It is

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4Jeffrey Schwamberger, "The Aristotelian Structure of the Kydian Revenge Tragedy Formula" (M.A. thesis, the Ohio State University, 1973).

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faithful to the spirit of Rome, without being a literal or historical document. There was never an emperor or even a quasi-emperor named Titus. There is no known specific source, either historical or literary for the play. Its origin rests squarely on two thousand years of Western literary and dramatic tradition. Essentially, Titus is of and for itself. Its lone heritage is that of the revered philosophical and mythological notion of romanitas (Romanity), which permeated the medieval and Renaissance worlds.

Even at the end of the sixteenth century, the Western world still fostered the myth that the ideals of Roman art, thought, and the law were important, if not necessary, factors for the successful state. Titus is a play about the essence of romanitas. The most dominant ideas, images, and actions of the play exemplify the distinct brand of Roman justice (pietas) that served as the philosophical rationale for a well-ordered Augustan world and as the premiere course of honor for every Roman citizen. Titus Andronicus is a play about the virtue of pietas, its natural acts, its mythic necessity, and its eventual tragic dismissal. What is pietas? Pietas is a virtue comprising the spirit of loyalty in the fulfillment of familial and political obligations and the habit of particular actions that help to preserve the national honor and morality. It is the major purpose of this dissertation to demonstrate that pietas rather than revenge is the essential animating force in the plot of Titus Andronicus.

Analysis of the play will reveal strong parallels
between the Rome of Titus and the England of Shakespeare. Just as Roman *pietas* found itself at war with the tribal ethic of *faida* (familial vendetta), so the inherited notion of *pietas* in the sixteenth century found itself at war with the Humanism of the Renaissance. In the textual analysis of Shakespeare's play, it will be demonstrated that the Rome of Titus undergoes a metamorphosis as a result of a reliance on *pietas*. It will also be demonstrated that the play may especially have been a moral lesson informing Elizabethan England of the necessity of choosing the *pietas* of an older order over the unrestrained power and absolutism of a new order. A similar thesis has been successfully proposed by E. M. Tillyard in *Shakespeare's History Plays* for such works as *Richard III* and *Henry VI*. Much of Tillyard's argument rests on the acceptance of the sixteenth century work, *The Mirror for Magistrates*, as a seminal influence on English poets in the latter half of the sixteenth century, including William Shakespeare.

E. M. Tillyard has said that the political and moral climate of Elizabethan England was marked by a "strong popular desire to be instructed in the facts of history and that desire was due in part to the rise in patriotic temperature of England after the defeat of the Spanish Armada." He furthered observed

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that because of recent disorders and the fear of future disorder it became the custom for historians to present a moralized history of England in order to propagandize royalty and commoner alike with the sanctity of the monarchy and the enormity of rebellion. Probably the most important formative influences on the British mentality was *The Mirror for Magistrates*, a compilation of "tragical narratives" used to "point a very solemn contemporary moral, namely to educate the prince or magistrate by a series of exemplary stories that would teach him to shun vice."

*The Mirror for Magistrates* is a "series of imaginary monologues of certain British statesman who came to unfortunate ends." They discuss ethics and politics, but a chief concern is the future of poetry and the necessary freedom of the poet in a well-ordered universe. The hierarchy of cosmic order was paramount.

Here in a brief space are brought together and in a way equated God, the ruler, and justice. We shall not be wrong to think of all three in their traditional setting of primacies: God among the angels, the ruler among men, justice among virtues.

Moreover, the most often repeated references in *The Mirror for Magistrates* are to stars and their influence on the destinies of man. Tillyard concludes from this that the Elizabethan historian saw the planets as eminently powerful in the control of man's moral welfare and political fortunes. Tillyard also concludes that this doctrine was "shaping agent of Elizabethan

\[8\text{Ibid. p. 76.} \quad 9\text{Ibid., p. 72.} \quad 10\text{Ibid., p. 75.} \]
Thus as a political, ethical, and literary work, *The Mirror for Magistrates* holds an important position in English letters during the sixteenth century. There is little doubt that Shakespeare knew the work. It was first published in 1559 and appeared in revised editions in 1563, 1578, and 1587. It is commonly accepted as "the most authoritative exponent in poetry of the ideas on which Shakespeare's political ideas are founded."  

*Titus Andronicus* also deserves to be viewed as more than a flawed Aristotelian tragedy, a Senecan blood play, or a blatantly crowd-pleasing melodrama. A play's integrity need not be verified only by the application of external dramatic principles, literary conventions, and contemporary theatrical forms. A play ultimately has two contexts within which it can be judged: its own form and content and its effectiveness on the stage. Often a play causes despair because observers insist on seeing or hearing it in a context other than that which it prescribes for itself. In addition to being a convenient peg upon which to hang social, literary, and theatrical name tags, a play is an important source of information about social, literary, and theatrical conventions of its own time. Nor is dramatic or theatrical criticism some effete mechanism for excusing a problematic play because it does not fit into accepted or traditional categories. Further, just as no play can pretend to be complete without a performance, no study of

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Ibid., p. 76.  
12 Ibid., p. 90.  
xiv
a play can pretend to be complete without serious efforts made to determine production possibilities and expectations. That has been the critical approach to this present treatment of Titus Andronicus.

GENERAL PLAN

The five acts of the play trace the progress of pietas as it transforms a Rome, victorious in its mourning weeds, into a "wilderness of tigers" and back again. Within the body of the dissertation, five chapters, corresponding to the five-act structure of the play, will serve as the basic outline of the influence of pietas on the play. Preceding the five section, Chapter I, is devoted to a presentation of the following elements and a demonstration of their relationship to the play as such: a brief history of critical approaches to the play; a discussion of the authorship problem; Shakespeare's classical heritage; the concepts of romanitas, pietas, and Machiavellian virtu; influences of Virgil's Aeneid; the nature of the possible myth-ritual influence on the play; and a brief discussion of the tableaux vivants and the Chambers of Rhetoric as possible means of explaining theatrical conventions in the play.

Within each chapter various literary and theatrical traditions and conventions will be considered and applied to the text of the play as part of the analysis. The literary constructs of the morality and Rederyker plays have more than an analogous relationship to the thought and structure of Titus. Also, classical mythology plays a role in the progress
of pietas toward tragic inevitability. The close relationship between the virtue of pietas and the recurring references in Titus to pius Aeneas struggling to found a new Rome bespeaks some kind of myth analogue. The analogy grows in significance with the knowledge that the Golden Fleece has traditionally symbolized the virtue of Roman piety. Further, the titanic mythological struggle among Uranus, Cronus, and Zeus cannot be dismissed since it colors the poetry of Titus more than just casually. The same myth will be shown to recur in both Roman and British mythology.

Accompanying the discussion of the myth analogue in each chapter is a demonstration of the relationship between the many ritual and ceremonial actions in the play and the Roman virtue of pietas. Most of those rituals, in fact, are so closely tied into acts of pietas that the play could be perceived both dramatically and theatrically as a giant ceremonial of pietic acts. Special attention in the dissertation, then, is given to the theatrical significance of triumphal entries, funerals, coronations, weddings, hunting, elections, feasts, prayers, oaths, killing, and masquerading. Derivative from and germane to these formal ritual actions are many other actions such as kneeling, crying, and kissing that occur in and become part of the larger ceremonies.

The combination of the ritual elements, symbolic characterization, and the allegorical devices that are used in the play creates a third subsidiary consideration in this study of Titus: an overall plan for staging. It will be
demonstrated how staging conventions common to the tableaux vivants and the Rederyker stage can be used to solve many of the play's time and place problems often considered insoluble. Such techniques as allegorical staging, emblematic staging, and simultaneous staging are employed in those instances: the non-literal quality of the play demands conventionality rather than verisimilitude in making it an effective piece of theatre.

Chapter II discusses pietas as the efficient cause of the tragic action. By means of an analysis of the text of Act I, it will be demonstrated that the plot structure of Titus rests on a foundation of pietic and actively non-pietic behavior and that the praxis of the play is composed of actions generated by or in response to pietas.

Chapter III demonstrates that Act II illustrates the antithesis of pietas especially through allegorical language and staging. By an exploration of Titus's grief and pain in Act III, Chapter IV reveals pietas suffering. Chapter V is a study of Titus finally forced to recognize that pietas is the cause of personal and political crisis in Rome, and Chapter VI presents the resolution as achieved in Act V: the transforming and purifying power of pietas in bringing order out of chaos.

The primary source for this study is the play itself. The text used is that based upon the First Quarto of 1594,13

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13 The 1594 Quarto edition was entered in the Stationers' Register by John Danter.
which was printed (according to the most recent and authoritative information) from Shakespeare's manuscript or a copy of it. A number of stage directions suggest the author's hand. Quarto Two (1600) does not represent Shakespeare's revision. Quarto Three (1611) has no authority. The First Folio (1623) is based on Quarto Three but adds a scene (3. 2) that has sufficient excellence to be considered authentic. Most contemporary texts are based on Quarto One and the added scene from the First Folio. In this dissertation the Folger Library edition of the play is used for textual citations and stage directions. Further, and of special note, stage directions from the text are used as indicators of structural divisions within each chapter.

CHAPTER I

HOTCHPOTCH

The State of the Question

If the critics are correct, Titus Andronicus is at one and the same time one of the worst and best plays in the Shakespearean canon. As a piece of dramatic literature, Titus has not been spared harsh criticism for the past three hundred years. As a piece of theatre, however, Titus has moved audiences to both swoons and cheers. Opponents of the play have been unable to explain its success during its early years on the stage, its popularity as revised and revived by Ravenscroft, and its international acclaim as produced by Peter Brook in 1955. The theatrical gods must certainly have smiled at the almost ludicrous behavior of those English critics who raised a furor in 1957 when Mr. Brook's production was chosen to represent England as part of a cultural exchange with the Iron Curtain countries. Not only were the critics horrified at the choice of this particular play, but they were also internationally embarrassed by a production so brazenly dedicated to theatrical sensationalism--a very un-British thing. Milton Shulman of the Evening Standard concluded that snob appeal had made the play a work of British Art, and he cynically and rather overtly questioned the aesthetic judgement
of admiring continental audiences. On July 2, 1957, he wrote:

We are assured that audiences from Paris through Zagreb to Warsaw enthusiastically hailed this occasion, which make me suspect either European standards of theatre or their ability to understand the English language.¹

This same production prompted Derek Monsey of the London Sunday Examiner to write about Laurence Olivier's participation in the Brook production in less than flattering terms. He concluded that if Olivier

... is ever to be the first Lord of the English stage, he really will have to stop flirting with Monroes and Monsters and find some plays which are really worthy of him.²

Meanwhile, on the continent, Jan Kott was inclined to a different position. Although first published in English several years later, his review of the production revealed that he found the performance he witnessed among the five greatest theatrical experiences of his life. In his review Kott also revealed an honest impatience with the play. On reading it, he found Titus childish and ridiculous. He summed up his dualistic response without compromising Shakespeare or himself:

When a contemporary play seems to us in reading flat and childish, while in the theatre it thrills and overpowers us, we say that it makes good theatre. But to say of Shakespeare that he


²Derek Monsey, London Sunday Examiner, 7 July 1957.
makes good theatre is rather funny. And there is little doubt that Titus Andronicus is a play by Shakespeare, or rather a play adapted by him. But so is Hamlet for that matter. The difference being that in Titus Shakespeare has been just beginning to shape the dramatic material found in his model. He had already been forming great characters, but was unable as yet to make them fully articulate. They stammer, or—like Lavinia—have their tongues cut off. Titus Andronicus is already Shakespearean theatre; but a truly Shakespearean text is yet to come.3

In 1955, Sketch’s reviewer wrote about Peter Brook’s production in a similar vein:

I write this with the cheers of a Stratford Festival audience thundering in the memory. One can be cynical about manufactured enthusiasm; but here was the real thing, the sustained shout of an audience excited by one of the least-expected triumphs in modern record.4

The production was not supposed to have succeeded. That expectation was not part of a new tradition. One hundred years earlier, a reviewer in the London Sunday Times (21 March, 1852) made special mention that the Britannia Saloon was crowded to overflowing for a performance of Titus Andronicus. The unidentified reviewer did not know whether the cause of the overflow crowd was the play or the appearance of the popular black actor Ira Aldrich in the role of Aaron. Even then the critical appraisal of the play was uncomplimentary. Titus has had notorious press; but if notoriety is a mark of success, Titus is one of the greatest successes in

4Sketch, 8 August 1955.
theatrical history. The play has not been ignored. The question that has arisen time and time again is: why?

With its scenes of blood and violence, its immense scope, its rhetorical poetry and larger-than-life characters, Titus seems to sprawl over its pages in defiance of any dramatic categorization. It is more a great dramatic poem than a tidy play, but its success on the stage belies all critical comment. Titus is a very ambitious tragedy. On the technical level it indicates the hand of a playwright who was a master of stage resources. It combines earlier traditions of the revenge tragedy, the morality play, and Ovidian narrative poetry.

Terence Spencer has observed that Shakespeare seemed anxious "not to get it all right, but to get it all in." No one has argued with Mr. Spencer on that count. Titus almost exhausts the myriad of Renaissance stage tricks and fills the stage with theatrical effects. The role of Titus has always placed an overwhelming burden on the actor, because in the course of the play the actor must portray an old man who is at the same time majestic, pathetic, regal, profound, and insane. As a result of all of those factors, most observers classify the play as distinctly Shakespearean, being both popular and literary, a stage play and a dramatic sourcebook.

Its greatness obviously comes not from any neatness of construction, but rather from the presentation of the cosmic and titanic struggle between the forces of good and evil. For, when all unity of composition seems abandoned, it is the ethical struggle that firmly holds the play together. Viewed in that manner, the characters can be seen as larger than life. Saturninus, Tamora, and Aaron share in the characteristics of Evil; Titus, Marcus, and Lucius share in Good. There is some shading for theatrical interest, but the characters and their struggle create at the heart of the play a medieval morality tale with Titus as a not-so-everyday Everyman. All the characters display variations in their tendencies to good or evil, but the variations are more often than not philosophical, rhetorical, or theatrical postures. Moreover, if the characters and the struggle were everyday, Titus's fall from power and his subsequent rise to spirituality would not be titanic. As kingmaker, the welfare of Rome depends on him; chastised and purified, the new Titus symbolized the birth of a new Rome. Titus is Shakespeare's Everyman. Traces of Titus as Everyman color Shakespeare's future works. Considered in that manner, Titus foreshadows Lear, Hamlet, Macbeth, and Othello as their archetype. Instead of being dismissed as an immature tragedy, Titus deserves to be considered as a seminal play in the Shakespearean canon.

At the time Titus first appeared on the London stage, revenge tragedies were in vogue. Marston, Kyd, and Marlowe were entertaining the audiences of the day with blood, lust,
and intrigue. Violence was common to the Elizabethans in the theatre, at the bear pit, and even in the streets. In fact, violence and bloodshed were everyday occurrences in the life of Shakespeare and his contemporaries. Within that milieu, Shakespeare contributed Henry VI, Richard III, and, of course, The Most Lamentable Roman Tragedy of Titus Andronicus. Of those plays, only Richard III bears a resemblance to Titus, with its catalogue of horrors and the machinations of twisted minds. Both plays display obvious experimental techniques, especially those dealing with the tragic hero, the Machiavellian villain, the pathos of melodrama, and the cruelty of historical inevitability. Both defy easy categorization; but Titus remains Shakespeare's first full-blown tragedy.

Titus is hardly appealing on first reading, but it is more attractive than it might appear. It owes much of its dramatic and literary inspiration to works of Seneca and Ovid, but none of those works seems to have had an essential influence. The almost monotonous pattern of murder, rape, and mutilation seems uniquely Shakespearean rather than Senecan. The only place where such atrocities are matched is within the Shakespearean canon itself. Ovid's influence can easily be traced through the elaborate and sensuous language in the play, but those were also popular dramatic conventions of Shakespeare's day. The use of the rape of Philomel and the revenge of Procne, attributed in the text of Titus to Ovid as a source, was a popular theme in Renaissance and Elizabethan
literature. The retelling of the story with a pattern of colorful images and in a web of complex moral conflicts was not unfamiliar to Elizabethan audiences.

Derek Traversi recently reconsidered the worth of the play when he concluded:

... Throughout the play, emblematic artifice and ferocious melodrama share between them a tragedy which is crude and largely monotonous in its striving after effect; but it is fair to add that the monotony answers to a definite unity of style and conception, through which we glimpse at times, anticipations of greater plays to come.6

Mr. Traversi has come a long way from his earlier position (shared by many others) that the play is alternately decorative, moralizing, and sensational.

As a piece of dramatic literature, Titus has had few admirers and champions among Shakespearean scholars. Hereward T. Price, who began but did not publish a variorum edition of the play, spoke for its good qualities: vigorous language, occasional passages of genuine poetic inspiration, and the demands it made upon the playhouse. He insisted that the playwright showed an understanding of his craft and that the play foreshadowed the greater tragedies that appear later in his career. The list of favorable advocates is short but impressive: Peter Brook, Jan Kott, H. T. Price, and Alan Sommers. Mr. Sommers, a leading contemporary revisionist in Titus criticism, has furnished some extremely significant

ideas about both the form and subject matter of the play. Nonetheless, the detractors spare few words. T. S. Eliot considered Titus "one of the stupidest and most uninspired plays ever written, a play in which it is incredible that Shakespeare had any hand at all." Dr. Johnson, William Hazlitt, and S. T. Coleridge denied Shakespeare's authorship; the editor of the New Cambridge Edition, Dover Wilson, attributes much of the play to Peele and "saves some of the Shakespeare passages only by the desperate expedient that they are really not bad but are a clever burlesque of bad writing." Winifred Nowottny thought that the play was repulsive and that it should be removed from the canon. M. C. Bradbrook praised the play for its grand-scale planning but concluded that Titus was little more than a Renaissance pageant. Bradbrook also implied that the violence and horror


8T. S. Eliot. Selected Essays (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Co., 1932), p. 82. Mr. Eliot is also remembered for having called Hamlet an artistic failure.


might have little appeal to an audience.\textsuperscript{11} Personal taste seems to have colored much of the criticism that has surrounded \textit{Titus} for so many decades. No doubt \textit{Titus} tells of murders, rapes, and massacres, Acts of black night, abominable deeds, Complots of mischief, treason, villainies, Ruthful to hear, yet piteously perform'd.

5. 1. 66-69

Such activity has always been the stuff of drama; it was especially true of the Renaissance.

Other elements within the play prompted J. Dover Wilson to comment on the discovery of Lavinia by Marcus in scene 4 of Act II as "a bundle of ill-matched conceits held together by sticky sentimentalism"; and he is convinced that Shakespeare is "pulling our leg."\textsuperscript{12} The pattern that emerges from the above criticism reveals an interest in the play's authorship problem, its Senecan-Ovidian heritage, and its probable relationship to future great tragedies. The question that most critics have forgotten to ask is the very one that Marcus asks of the universe when Lavinia is about to reveal her malefactors:

\begin{quote}
0, why should nature build so foul a den, 
Unless the gods delight in tragedies? 
4. 1. 64-65
\end{quote}

Perhaps the answer lies in the very rhetoric of the question. Perhaps the gods do delight in such tragedies.


\textsuperscript{12}Wilson, \textit{Titus Andronicus}, pp. liii-liv.
Perhaps the critics have forgotten that the answer to the problems in the play may lie within the play itself: in its awkwardness, its excessive rhetoric, its violence. Perhaps the question is merely rhetorical. Coming when it does in the play, the question seems slightly absurd. For a moment—and what a moment—the play stops. Lavinia is about to reveal her persecutors. Titus is about to find out the real truth for the first time. It is a great theatrical moment, and the playwright seems to be congratulating himself on having gotten as far as he has. He has constructed the kind of tragedy that brings delight in its very form. Perhaps the critics are perplexed that the gods delight in such tragedies. The moral framework of the play is unfocused, but so it is in Macbeth and King Lear. There is no consolation at the end of Titus as there is in Hamlet, but Lear has even less. Implicit in such observations is the assumption that Titus is really not a tragedy or not a very good one. Beneath such observations seems to be the attitude that the play is a failure, especially since so much of it has to be excused or explained away by the rationalization that it was Shakespeare's first play or that he was unskilled and inexperienced. The optimistic critics have preferred to look upon the play as an exercise in bad taste and have been happy to note that Shakespeare outgrew such monstrosities. Such an approach is as gratuitous as that of the London Sunday Times when it reported on March 21, 1852:

... It was this corruption of the tragic unto the horrible, without one soothing element—this picture of human wickedness in its brutal
extravagance—which has banished Titus Andronicus from the stage for upwards of two centuries; although it was often acted, and was an especial favorite with the unrefined audiences of the period when Shakespeare wrote for the stage.13

Negative critical attitudes toward the play mount, but A. C. Hamilton seems to have found an appropriate approach to a study of Titus. He has said that Shakespeare's "first tragedy would be deliberately conceived and executed" and that "its excesses may be a sign of strength, not weakness."14 Mr. Hamilton's theory will be tested in the course of this study.

Actually the play goes far beyond the excesses of Seneca and the so-called tragedies of blood. In The Spanish Tragedy, Hieronimo suffers for the death of one child; Titus suffers for twenty-four, one of whom he kills himself. As a matter of fact, the tragedy of blood was really never bloody enough to accommodate Shakespeare's plays. It is possible that the violence and bloodshed within the play had other purposes than tingling the spine and pleasing the crowd. Those things it did. It followed a mode; it was in vogue. The exhuberance of the action and the imaginative fertility of the construction made it superior to The Spanish Tragedy. It rivaled anything of Marlowe's. It was a remarkable piece

of theatre with its strained and luxuriant poetry and its element of cruelty. Alan Sommers characterized Titus as a display of "aesthetic sadism." That may be its failure.

Certain questions remain: what about the play itself as Shakespeare wrote it? is there a Titus that exists apart from the critics, editors, producers? can the play be viewed from the inside out to find some new and different significance for it? To answer these questions, the pages of history must be turned back to 1594.

Titus is the only Shakespearean play of which the twentieth century has discovered a complete Quarto that is earlier than any hitherto known. The copy of the 1594 Quarto that was discovered in Sweden in 1904 was not published in facsimile until 1936. Until that rather tardy publication, scholarship related to Titus has been relatively sparse and generally concerned with verifying Shakespearean authorship and establishing correct textual readings. Although there has been some disagreement about the date of authorship, most editors have placed it between 1589 and 1594. Geoffrey Bullough has given a rather extensive treatment of the problem and other related matters in his Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare. His summation is worthy of note:

On 6 February 1594 'a Noble Roman Historye of Tytus Andronicus' was entered in the Stationers' register to John Danter along with a ballad on the same subject. The play was printed in the same

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15 Sommers, "Wilderness of Tigers," p. 275.
year (Q I). A second Quarto, printed in 1600 by James Roberts for Edward White, corrected the text somewhat. A third Quarto was printed for Edward White in 1611, and the first Folio text was set up from this, with the addition of some stage directions, the whole of Act III, Scene 2 (in which Titus expiates on his grief and anger) and two other lines.16

Scholarly investigation has concluded that the First Quarto was printed from Shakespeare's manuscript or from a copy of it, and most modern editors consider the authentic text to be the First Quarto with the addition of Act III, Scene 2, which first appeared in the First Folio.

The idea that Titus may not be entirely Shakespeare's is at least as old as 1687, when Thomas Ravenscroft, who had recently presented his version of the play, wrote that he had been told that Shakespeare had given some touches to several of the characters.17 His evidence is at best inconclusive. The weight of the argument has been on the side of Shakespeare. Even though a discussion of the date of composition is not germane to this study of Titus, a brief review of the problem is useful. There is an allusion to a Roman hero named Titus in the play A Knack to Know a Knave, acted in 1592. Whether or not that is the same play is unknown. Nor is the play "titus & andronicus" acted by Sussex's men in 1594 clearly identified with Titus Andronicus. Ben Jonson's remark that Titus had held the stage for twenty-five or thirty years would

16 Bullough, Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare, p. 3.
17 Ibid., pp. 4-5.
place its debut between 1584 and 1589. The date widely favored is 1592-1594, but there is no strong reason to believe that Titus could not have been written in the eighties.

Much of the scholarship devoted to verifying the date of composition has attempted to show that Shakespeare could not have written the play. The search for an Ur-Titus has accompanied the above-mentioned scholarship. A successful search for an older, and presumably worse, play would help to absolve Shakespeare from initial authorship. Theories have been proposed that contend that Shakespeare doctored an earlier play belonging to Peele, or Greene, or some unknown German playwright. Sylvan Barnet comments on this and other problems of authorship:

... No such play has come to light, and though it is possible that Shakespeare's source was a play now extant only in Shakespeare's revision, it is more than possible--even likely--that his source was a prose tale regarded as history. The Folger Shakespeare Library has a unique copy of a mid-eighteenth-century booklet entitled The History of Titus Andronicus which contains a prose narrative, but this latter seems to be a reprint of a much older piece--possibly of the late-sixteenth-century version that may have been Shakespeare's source. Certainly the prose narrative is not indebted to the play; it makes no reference to Shakespeare--as it surely would have if it had been written in the eighteenth century--and it includes a good deal of alleged history that Shakespeare does not. Furthermore, some of its characters are unnamed; if the narrative were based on the play, Aaron, for example, would doubtless be mentioned by name, but he is merely called "the wicked Moor."  

In essence, Mr. Barnet is correct: there is no Ur-Titus;

however, his other conclusions are conjectural at best. To his credit, he conjectures on the side of Shakespeare when he says:

... Put it this way: the extant History of Titus Andronicus is almost surely a reprint of a much older piece, quite possibly a reprint of the tale that Shakespeare dramatized. There is no opposing evidence.  

Perhaps Mr. Barnet is closest to the truth when he looks within the play for an answer. He continues:

The prose tale, like almost all fictions, draws upon earlier fictions; Lavinia calls attention to the parallel between her plight and Philomela's in Ovid's Metamorphoses; the banquet of human flesh is referred to in Ovid, and is an important part of Seneca's Thyestes. If Shakespeare did use the prose tale, he did not have to turn to Ovid or Seneca, but he surely knew some of their work at first hand anyway. But the source of the play is not simply in books. The play is indebted to an Elizabethan idea of what a classical tragedy ought to be--richly ornamented, with a hero overwhelmed by passion and driven to seek revenge. The villainous Aaron, however, is derived from another dramatic tradition, that of the native morality play, which offered (in the Vice) models of ingenious unpitying villainy. The Senecan and Ovidian influences--first hand or through the prose tale--are real, but they have been discussed almost too much.

The argument for Shakespearean authorship rests partially on the fact that in 1598 Francis Meres listed the play as one of Shakespeare's; and "in 1623 Heminges and Condell, who had acted with Shakespeare for some twenty years, included Titus in the Folio collection." There is no real reason to disassociate

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19Ibid.  
20Ibid.  
21Ibid., p. 284.
Shakespeare from Titus; all the available information or evidence insists that the play is his.

Seen within the context of the Shakespearean canon, Titus could be considered as a seminal work for later histories and tragedies. Titus could be interpreted as a thinly disguised Elizabethan history play that sermonizes on the wounds of civil war, moral decay, and political intrigue, a sermon of special interest to Englishmen whose monarch was an heirless and aging queen. Titus could also be seen as the concluding (although written first) statement in his Roman continuum. The Roman plays are all concerned in part with civil strife and political virtue. Many of the concerns of Rome had become the concerns of an England emerging as one of the most powerful countries in the Western world. Titus seems to mirror both worlds. It is the reflection of those two worlds that has raised new questions about the significance of Titus as a piece of dramatic literature and as a relevant vehicle for production. The answers to these questions can be found in a synthesis of various disparate elements: Roman and Tudor politics and history, Shakespeare's knowledge of the classics, the ethical and literary heritage handed down through the ages from Rome to England, and the relationship among all of these to the theatre of Shakespeare's day.

Since Titus deals with Roman types, Roman ideals, and Roman socio-political constructs rather than with actual historical particulars, it cannot be classified as Roman in the same manner as Coriolanus, Julius Caesar, or Anthony and
Cleopatra. Titus both is and is not a Roman play. It is faithful to the spirit of Rome without being a literal or historical document. There never was a emperor or even a quasi-emperor named Titus. There is no certain source either historical or literary for the play. Its existence rests squarely on the shoulders of William Shakespeare and the accumulated tradition of two thousand years of Western drama.

Its greatest heritage is the revered notion of romanitas (Romanity), which permeated the medieval and Renaissance worlds. Even at the end of the sixteenth century, the Western world fostered the myth and ethics that recognized the ideals of Roman art, thought, politics, and law as important for the successful state. Titus is a play about the essence of romanitas and its struggle against political vice. The heart of Titus is the virtue of pietas, the brand of Roman justice, patriotism, and familial loyalty that served as the rationale for the Augustan world. Whether or not Shakespeare recognized such things cannot be proven. The possibility that he was aware of them and consciously incorporated them into his play is easier to show. Whether or not they were intended to show the dangers of the past as a lesson to the present is a subject for critical analysis and interpretation. The practical theatrical application of such critical findings could result in an uniquely different production of Titus Andronicus.

J. Dover Wilson has written that Shakespeare had a limited knowledge of classical learning. He based his con-
clusion on a remark by Ben Jonson, a great admirer of Shakespeare, who said that Shakespeare had 'small Latin and less Greek.' Wilson considered Shakespeare no scholar, "whose only source for his Roman plays was an English translation of a French translation of Plutarch's Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans."22 On the other hand it appears certain that Shakespeare was at least able to read Latin when he had occasion to do so. Definite books and passages that he used were available, as far as is known, only in the Latin language. "For the writing of Macbeth, he seems to have equipped himself by a study of Seneca and in particular of the Hercules Furens in the original."23

J. A. K. Thomson has made a complete study of Shakespeare and his relations to the classics. He has found a pattern of evidence that Shakespeare read many of the Latin classics in their original language but obviously avoided echoing or imitating the originals. Another important contribution that Thomson made to an understanding of Shakespeare's classical training is his thesis that the humanistic spirit figuratively permeated the air men breathed. Elizabethan art and literature was "full of classical names, allusions, quotations, while an almost continuous succession of masques, shows, revels, processions, royal progresses and the like, in

23Ibid., p. 16.
each of which there was sure to be one or more characters
drawn from ancient history of mythology, brought some knowledge
of Greece and Rome even to the most illiterate." Mr. Thomson
has made a strong case for indirect learning.

Gilbert Highet may have overstated his case for
Shakespeare's knowledge of the classics when he concluded:

Shakespeare was therefore, directly or
indirectly, a classically educated poet who loved
the classics. They were his chief book-education.
They were one of the greatest challenges to his
creative power. His classical training was wholly
successful, because it taught him their beauties
at school, encouraged him to continue his reading
of the classics in mature life, and helped to
make him a complete poet, and a whole man.

There seems no doubt that Shakespeare knew Latin; as with so
many other things, he took what he heard, read, and felt and
came up with his own Latin or Roman literature. He has
always been complimented for his pictures of ancient Rome, its
institutions, its glory, and its decline. Dryden and Pope
affirmed that Shakespeare knew what he was doing and that he
he was making a serious effort to represent the Roman scene
as genuinely as he could. As a matter of fact, his occasional
blunders and carelessness jar against his general care and
scrupulosity in dramatizing the nature of Rome. He was

24J. A. K. Thomson, Shakespeare and the Classics

25Gilbert Highet, The Classical Tradition: Influences
on Western Literature (New York: Oxford University Press,
producing a

... mimesis of the veritable history of the most important people (humanly speaking) who ever lived, the concern of every educated man in Europe and not merely something of local, national, patriotic interest; and he was conscious of all this while he was building up his dramatic situations and expositions of characters for the players to fulfill. It can, therefore, hardly fail to be relevant to our interpretations of the plays to explore the views of Roman history in Shakespeare's time.

One other consideration must be made. Gilbert Highet has reminded scholars that "most of Shakespeare's writing is English of the English" and that the poet clothed those English people in Greek and Roman imagery and decorative reference that is "sometimes superficial but more than often incomparably effective."27 Shakespeare's Romans often belonged to the time of Queen Elizabeth and King James, and the most intriguing political questions of the day were those connected with princes and kings. With aspiring Roman Emperors all over the place, political theorists returned to Roman history and tradition in their study of political morality. Playwrights were wont to follow the suit of philosophers. Thus Shakespeare's Roman plays are both English and Roman. In some ways his Roman plays combined all of his favorite themes: the Renaissance culture of Europe, English monarchy and nobility, and classical history and legends. Paradoxically, Shakespeare's Roman plays contain fewer misrepresentations of Roman culture

26Spencer, "Shakespeare and the Elizabethan Romans," p. 27.

27Highet, Shakespeare's Classics, p. 195.
and deeper insight into Roman character than those of any of his contemporaries.

During the Renaissance, ancient, and in particular Roman, history was explored as the material of political teachings because it was one of the few bodies of consistent and continuous historical material available. In fact, throughout Europe, the most exciting and pedantic of Renaissance studies was the Roman culture. Shakespeare's plays are part of an important tradition in the interpretation of Roman culture and in the furthering of Roman ideals. Romanitas was not just an historical and cultural myth. It was an active political ethics for the Elizabethans.²⁸

Romanitas began with the Romans. It was not a manufactured ideal; rather it grew out of the history and tradition of the Roman people. It was an ideal that permeated the entire Roman way of life. It recalled a primitive and superhuman ethics based on "discipline, frugality, hardihood, white-toga-ed figures, dignity, military precision, the simple life lived to heroic heights--perpetual battlefields."²⁹ The focus of this life style was the state. It was that ethics that had enabled Rome to endure for so many hundreds of years. The best and the strongest had always been at the disposal of the state. "Her service had been at once their chief


obligation and greatest joy."30 Thus politics was the field of duty and honor. A good man and a great man was a patriotic man, and intimately tied to his patriotism was his personal courage. Such an ethics had a counterpart in Tudor England and was especially prominent in the middle of the sixteenth century.31

Out of the notion of individual responsibility to the state grew the whole complex of Roman law, a system of legal and political justice still influencing most of the countries of the Western world. "The rights and privileges of the citizens, upon whom the whole Roman system was based, depended ultimately upon the incomparable majesty of the Roman law as their ultimate safeguard and supreme sanction."32 Romanitas was a curious and paradoxical ideal based on the citizen's

30 Ibid., p. 44.

31 The notion of the commonwealth was the primary political concern of many important figures in the reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI, and Elizabeth I. The concept of commonwealth presupposed that all men had one major social function: to work for the common good. S. T. Bindoff, has indicated that the notion of commonwealth was the "leitmotiv of many early sixteenth-century treatises." (Tudor England (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1950), p. 150.) For a complete treatment of this political phenomenon, the following works are considered essential: History of England (W. E. Lunt); The Earlier Tudors 1485-1558 (J. D. Mackie); Tudor England (H. D. Traill and J. S. Mann); English Historical Documents (C. H. Williams, ed.). Some of the more prominent advocates of this political philosophy included William Tyndale, Robert Crowley, Hugh Latimer, and Archbishop Thomas Cranmer.

obligation of patriotism to the state and the state's obligation
to protect the rights and privileges of the citizens. The
spirit of romanitas secured privileges, served as the foundation
of justice, and preserved the heart, the judgment, and the
convictions of the state. It was that law that governed
commerce between men, societies, and nations. It was the glory
of Rome, so much so that the greatest honor rendered to a non-
Roman was citizenship and protection under the law. It was
the heart of the body-politic and the emblem of human decency
to the entire world. To be a descendant of Rome was a mark of
historical selectivity. That was romanitas.

For centuries, the laws and traditions of romanitas
informed Europe. Even after the collapse of the Empire,
people spoke of themselves as Romans. During the Carolingian
Renascence, Charlemagne rekindled the spirit of Rome. Out of
the ashes of Europe rose a Holy Roman Empire. Much that was
Roman was changed or Christianized, but the essential spirit
of the ancient world remained. Nevertheless, romanitas had to
accomodate itself to the demands of a tribal culture and a
powerful church. J. M. Wallace-Hadrill has described the
manner in which romanitas was preserved in the late empire,
during its collapse, and through the middle ages into the
reign of Charlemagne.33

Both the church and the state attempted to pervert

33J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, The Barbarian West: the
passim.
the Roman ideal. Both sought for power and authority beyond that defined by the Roman law and tradition. Even during the Empire, Augustus honored the notion of first in authority (auctoritas) but one among equals in power (potestas). He was careful to avoid the use of such terms as rex and dictator. Neither Charlemagne nor the Church was that magnanimous. In effect, however, the ideal remained relatively secure because of the Church's moral influence on the rulers and rulers' dependance upon the feudal state. Kingship and imperialism were limited.

Philosophers maintained the purity of romania. F. C. Copleston's synthesis of medieval political philosophy shows that Thomas Aquinas and others shared in espousing the Roman ideal of power and authority. Their conclusion clearly established the prince as the arbiter and promoter of social virtue distinct from the Church. The medieval philosophers saw as the foremost task of government the establishment and maintenance of those conditions, "principally matters of justice, which allowed citizens to lead the good life. Its protective role concerned crime rather than sin; it was out to prevent disturbances of the public order rather than moral wickedness it was unable to judge." Romanitas had undergone


a slightly paternalistic metamorphosis.

Happily, the general medieval posture was actually quite rational and pragmatic. Aquinas and other medieval philosophies handed over to the Renaissance a fairly accurate concept of the Roman way:

An immemorial conviction persisted that a right existed more primitive than any instituted by custom or legislative acts, a law in nature which set bounds to human will. In the Antigone it held sway over the gods themselves: Aristotle had taken the allusion and contrasted a universal logos at work within natural processes with the particular regulations imposed by man. The Roman Law itself, historically a majestic piece of pragamtism composed from governmental edicts, half-consciously seemed to imply an ethical feeling for an underlying decency in things. Its foundations were not altogether arbitrary, and if particular details were determined by empirical observation and methodic positivism, not by religious, mystical, or philosophical insight, it represented on the whole a norm of social behavior which corresponded with common convictions. Its teachers and practitioners, though concerned less with philosophical speculations than with fulfillment of obligations arising out of existing social conditions discerned a difference between the 'natural' and the 'artificial', at least to the extent that a juridical 'logic of facts' could be discerned underneath particular rules grounded on political expedience.36

It is no accident that the concept of the body-politic should have been of great concern to the Elizabethans. The Romans and the Medievalists had always compared the state to the body of man. The tradition persisted into the Renaissance. All three eras attempted to establish an order for the body-politic. The Romans found it in the law that preserved their

36Gilby, Political Aquinas, p. 17.
Romanity. The Renaissance looked longingly back to Rome for an inspiration for social order. The search was intensified by new ideas that threatened to change radically the face of Western politics. Those ideas flowed from nationalism, absolutism, and Machiavellianism. A new kind of prince, over and above the law, had appeared in Europe and in England. Romanitas was locked in a new struggle. Power and authority had taken on new meanings different from those established by the centuries-old Roman Law. In both systems it was the prince who was crucial to the preservation of the political order. England did not escape the conflict, and many writers looked back to Imperial Rome for the answers. "The problem of the difference between a benevolent monarch and an odious tyranny, and the gradations by which the one may merge into the other--that was the real interest; and Imperial Rome was the true material for that."37

Shakespeare himself must have felt the dichotomy in English politics. He was a man of the marketplace. The English were especially aware of the political dilemma presented by their monarch Elizabeth. They had lived through an era in which their kings, Henry VIII and Edward VI, had confronted things Roman and thrown many of them aside. Nowhere else in Europe had the battle between romanitas and humanitas been so violent. (See page 22, Footnote 31.) There

were those who were looking for a compromise. Shakespeare chose to place men in the contemporary setting between the angels and the beasts. "The greatness of the Elizabethan Age was that it contained so much of the new without bursting the noble form of the old order." There was no guarantee that it would last.

The conflict between romanitas and humanitas was probably felt more strongly by the artist and writers in Elizabethan England than by most other subjects. The humanist aspired "to the splendor of antique life." He "emphasized the ideal of literary elegance and considered the imitation of the Roman authors the best way of learning to speak and write well in prose and in verse. Moreover, admiration for the classical models extended from their form to their content, and it became increasingly fashionable to quote their words and restate their ideas." The new individuality, pragmatism, and absolutism confronted hundred of years of actual and mythological romanitas.

In the political arena the conflict was most pronounced. Machiavellian ideas were no longer laughed at; they had been proven to have more than a measure of political truth and

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40 Ernst Cassirer, Paul Oskar Kristeller, and John Herman Randall, Jr. eds., The Renaissance Philosophy of Man (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), p. 3.
pragmatic value. To Machiavelli the state was the center of the cosmos. Differing from the Romans, he placed the state utterly supreme above the citizens. To him the ends of the state overrode individual interest and private morals. Machiavelli's state (called patria) must demand blind loyalty and 'patriotism' from its subjects. It was patriotism dictated by the state; and any means for achieving the ends of the patria was justified. Machiavelli introduced a new kind of social order and political justice.41

The Roman world honored its prince for his justice in administering the law. The Medieval world looked upon its prince as a representative of God administering justice tempered by Christian love and mercy. The Renaissance introduced a new prince. He was a man whose greatest strength lay in his political-military deeds. His central motivation stemmed from an ambitious and flexible animo (spirit) whose virtu (strength) lay in action itself. The value of the action was determined by circumstances, consequences, time, and occasion, effectiveness and pragmatic results. The real prince must have an inordinate thirst for power and aggrandizement; he must never have self-delimiting doubts. Ambition must overleap itself. He was subject only to those laws to which he subscribed; and, even then, no order was permanent. The prince had no fixed principles and he had one goal: absolute

power. The greatest weakness for a prince was in being deceived; the greatest triumph was to deceive. Never was the true prince to allow passion, convention, or ethics to influence his actions. That was the direct antithesis of the Roman ideal of *romanitas*.

Shakespeare's play, *Titus Andronicus*, is about that conflict. It is a play about *pietas*, the heart of tribal revenge and rising Machiavellian duplicity. The most dominant ideas, images and actions of the play exemplify the distinct brand of Roman justice (*pietas*) that served as the philosophical rationale for Roman Law and a well-ordered Augustan world. *Titus* is a play about the virtue of *pietas*, its mythic and ethic necessity, and its eventual cosmic struggle for survival against the forces of evil and duplicity in the social-political arena. *Pietas* is better described than defined. *Webster's New International Dictionary of the English Language* describes *pietas* as:

... a spirit of loyalty in the fulfillment of recognized obligations;

and

... loyal devotion to parents, family, race, etc.; dutiful regard for natural ties; dutifulness in religion, habitual reverence for God or the Gods; zeal in the service or worship of God or the Gods.

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43 Webster's New International Dictionary of the English Language, 2nd ed., s.v. "*pietas."
Aristotle described pietas as "the most excellent of virtues."\textsuperscript{44} Aquinas described it as the virtue "by which we pay our debt to our parents or to our country."\textsuperscript{45} The gulf between pietas and The Prince was unbridgeable. Equally impossible to reconcile with the notion of pietas was the ethics of "private revenge (faida) which to the Germanic way of thinking was definitely owed to the victim and must be exacted by his tribe."\textsuperscript{46}

Pietas must not be thought of as a soft virtue. A violation of the pietic code demanded harsh punishment. Roman history has recorded the story of the death of a son decreed by a father for disobedience of orders even though a military victory resulted from the act of disobedience. Since the Romans were eminently a military nation, pietas absorbed some of the military sternness and discipline. Without doubt, pietas not only imposed a controlled life upon the individual but also enforced a political system (through the law) embodying the principles of justice and fair dealing. In effect, pietas informed a society "in which no man and no tribe was free, but all bound to obey an impersonal absolute authority, which imposed the necessity of self-controlled actions."\textsuperscript{47}

\textsuperscript{44}Aristotle, \textit{Ethics}. IV. 3 (1123b30).

\textsuperscript{45}Aquinas, \textit{Summa Theologica}. I. II. Q. 60. Art. 3.


\textsuperscript{47}Edith Hamilton, \textit{The Roman Way}, p. 112.
is one of those special Roman ethical conditions for living. "No other nation has tales of heroism and patriotic devotion and disinterested virtue to compare with the Roman: Horatius at the bridge, the boy threatened with torture to make him reveal Roman plans, who thrusts his hand into the fire and holds it there." Pietas was a distinctly Roman phenomenon and it embodied what Romans believed human beings could and should achieve. "High honor and love of country that made nothing of torture and death was what the Romans set first as the greatest thing of all." Only by an understanding of a nation's ideal is it possible to understand the nation itself. With regard to Rome, such an understanding is most important since the ideal emerged from the pragmatic facts of Roman life.

For more than three hundred years, Titus Andronicus has been treated as though the ethics of revenge solely motivated its characters and their actions. A true appreciation of the play must include the possibility that pietas rather than revenge is the essential motivation of the key figure, Titus. That Saturninus, Tamora, and Aaron act from a revengeful motivation cannot be denied; but the major convulsions within the plot of the play are a result of the titanic struggle of pietas for survival against foreign influences. Such a thesis would imply that Shakespeare's knowledge of Roman culture and political life was quite

48Ibid., p. 114. 49Ibid.
sophisticated. There is no denying that he knew Rome and the Roman character. There would seem to be no doubt that he knew and understood *pietas*. Shakespeare filled the play with references to the *Aeneid* of Virgil, an epic poem dedicated to the enshrinement of Roman virtue, especially the virtue of *pietas*. In fact, Shakespeare portrayed through mythological analogies a kind of neo-Aeneas in the role of Titus himself. In the course of this study the myth analogue will be presented and discussed with special reference to the *pietas* factor.

Some special consideration must be given to the Roman enshrinement of *pietas*. With the collapse of the Republic, Augustus saw the need for a moral and political revival of things Roman. He instructed poets to use their art as a moralizing agent in the renewal. Historians agree that Romans had always yearned for the past. They chose to live under the spell of the past. Augustus realized that need in the Roman spirit. He also realized that an enshrinement of traditions, customs, and attitudes into some sort of literary or mythological construct would not only aid his particular government but also preserve the best of the old Republican spirit. The mythicizing of the past turned a social and political element of a nation's culture into a literary, dramatic, and, most important, a religious element. Myth-making, especially if based upon historical and cultural facts, has always been an important factor in helping people to understand their relationship with the world around them. It has also provided political leaders with a means of explaining and directing the destinies
of their people.\textsuperscript{50}

The recorded history of the Romans is replete with evidence of the need for a religious revival in Rome at the time of Augustus. It is one of the minor ironies of Roman history that her historians shared a "strong religious-ethical approach to history."\textsuperscript{51} Rome's greatest historian, Tacitus, saw the collapse of the Republic as a result of a lack of pietas.\textsuperscript{52} He characterized the Roman people as needing a religious experience that satisfied the emotions, the imaginations, and instincts. He also indicated that within the Roman mentality was the idea of the cosmos as being reproduced in the minor cosmos of the Empire, with a definite connection existing between the political success of the state and its piety toward the gods. "The Romans had a lively concept of time in their history when men were conspicuous for their piety, religious scrupulosity, and concern for proper relations with the gods and one another."\textsuperscript{53}

The need for revival is voiced by the whole of Latin literature during the Augustan Era. Probably no other


\textsuperscript{52} Ibid., pp. 45-53.

\textsuperscript{53} Ibid., p. 64.
literature in the history of the world has devoted so much of itself to the good of the state and moral purification. Virgil eminently personified the ideal of the Roman artist. For eleven years he worked on the *Aeneid*, never to finish it. His goal was to mythologize the founding of Rome and the establishment of an Empire next to the gods in power and to characterize the founders of Rome and her early inhabitants as instruments of divine providence who were governed by a simple goodness uncorruptible by civilization.\(^5^4\) His hero was Aeneas, of whom history has fondly spoken as *pius* Aeneas.

Before leaving the *Aeneid* and its hero, several important comments about *pius* Aeneas should be expressed. W. A. Camps has studied the relationship of Aeneas to the archetypal Roman virtue. He has stated that

> ... to apply the epithet *pius* to Aeneas is not Virgil's invention but an echo of proverbial usage, in which it alluded to the hero's legendary act of religious and filial piety in saving his household gods and his father from burning Troy.\(^5^5\)

Mr. Camps also explains some of the specific acts of *pietas*

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\(^{54}\)Special attention is called here to the works of Sir James Frazer (*The Golden Bough*); Theodor H. Gaster (*Thespis: Ritual, Myth, and Drama in the Ancient Near East*); and Richard Ohmann (*The Making of Myth*). Their contributions to the relation of myth to literature and drama have been especially helpful in formulating some of the basic considerations in this study. Their arguments for the practice of literary mythologization have been of major import.

associated with Aeneas:

The traditional religious piety of Aenæs is further illustrated in the Aeneid by his frequent and careful acts of ritual observance (a Roman characteristic), and of course (though the poet does not use the word pius or pietas in the story as to mark this connection) by his obedience to the command from above which is his mission; it is thus a major theme. Another major theme is the pietas of Aeneas toward his father... whose funeral honors are the subject of the fifth book of the poem and for love of whom (pietas) Aeneas braves in the sixth book the terrors of the world below.56

The comparisons between Aeneas and Titus in this regard will be clearly illustrated throughout the body of this dissertation. Further study of the Aeneas story has little relevance here; however, the reader may wish to investigate the original work and documented studies of Virgil's masterpiece.57

In Titus, Shakespeare revealed that he was not only aware of, but also close to the thought in the Aeneid. No proof is needed that he may have read or studied the epic. His grasp of the classical tradition has already been shown to have been of a high order, especially his empathic feeling for Rome. He also demonstrated a familiarity with other myths and legends, both literary and folk, of the Eastern, Greco-Roman, and English traditions. The title of the play itself

56Ibid.

57In addition to W. A. Camps' work, the following studies are indispensible to an understanding of the Roman epic poem: Religion in Virgil (Cyril Bailey); The Vergilian Age (Robert Seymour Conway); and Virgil's Mind at Work (Robert W. Crutwell).
suggests an origin in the creation myths of Hesiod's *Theogony* that traces the struggle of the Titans Uranus and Cronus. That struggle resulted in the emergence of the god Zeus as the greatest of the non-human beings. Shakespeare used that myth also in somewhat more than an analogous manner in constructing the names, even the personalities, of his characters in *Titus*. In following a centuries-old tradition of adapting well-known myths and legends, Shakespeare gave *Titus* a mythological quality and integrity. Shakespeare's methodology reflected that of the myth-makers of the Augustan Age, especially with respect to the Virgilian creation of titanic and pietic heroes.

If *Titus* is mythic, then it must function in the manner of a myth; that is, it must provide not only a rationale for belief or assent to universal truths, but it must also provide a means for displaying the acceptance of those truths. Those goals are clearly accomplished in the story of the *Aeneid* and even in the *Theogony* of Hesiod. The *Aeneid* is especially supportive of this argument. The Romans strongly believed that in addition to assent there was needed proper ritual performances and the upkeep of national holy places to insure the prosperity of the nation. That is, the virtue of pietas needed ritual celebration as a manifestation of its truth and vitality. The Romans designed acts and rituals to

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59 Scott, *Histories of Tacitus*, pp. 53-70.
satisfy pietic responsibilities, to provide personal and social exercise of the virtue, and to serve as public reminders of man's obligation to man, the state, and the gods. "The obligations of cult and ritual could never be neglected, except to the grief of the state."60

Myth and ritual are blended in *Titus Andronicus* to form motifs of action, theme, and character. Shakespeare has exploited all the formal ceremonies available to drama: "triumphs" (1. 1. 100), funeral "rites" (1. 1. 78), prayers, coronations, supplications, weddings, banquets, "a solemn hunting" (2. 1. 112), and many instances of actions that display the range of pietic characterization. All of those actions have as their purpose the maintenance of order.61 In his book, *Thespis*, Theodor Gaster comments on ritual as a social and histrionic phenomenon:

Ritual is but one of the parents of drama. The other is Myth. The function of Myth, in this context, is to bring out in articulate fashion the inherent durative significance of the ritual program. Its method is to construe the punctual order of ceremonies in terms of an ideal situation involving "gods" or similar transcendent and preterpunctual beings. Its effect is to turn presentation into representation, to introduce the element of mimesis and to confer upon the participants the added and parallel role of actor, so that they are at one and the same time both protagonists of a direct experience and impersonators of characters other than their own. Ritual and Myth are thus correlatives in a single whole, and it is their

61 Hamilton, *The Early Shakespeare*, pp. 73-75.
organic combination that, in fact, produces Drama. In Titus these rituals, major ceremonials common to both Roman and Elizabethan societies, serve two purposes. They are brave attempts to maintain the established order, and their perversion reveals a world of chaos.

Scholars have debated almost too much over the theory that Greek drama began as a result of the above-described interpenetration of myth and ritual. There can be no doubt that the Aeneid, though narrative in form, dramatically testifies to the fact of and necessity for a myth, hero, cult, and ritual of pietas. Virgil's work succeeded because it revived, glamorized, and dignified an existing, though time-worn tradition. Its emphasis on the family and the household gods did not bring new ideas to Rome. Rather, the ancient virtue of the Romans had conditioned them to think of the family as the central unit in their patriotic duty. Just as the state was a minor cosmos within the whole universe, the family itself was a mini-cosmos within the order of both. Donald R. Dudley, noted historian of the ancient Roman civilization supports that view:

The domestic unit was the family (familia), husband, wife, their unmarried children, and the household slaves, living together in the home (domus). In a sense, the dead lived there as well, for the ancestors were honored by an annual festival, and their waxen effigies were kept in

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the house, and, carried by mourners, followed
the dead to the grave. The source of authority in
the small community was the father (paterfamilias),
reinforced by the legal view of his powers
(patriapotestas) that gave him rights not only
over all property belonging to the family, but
even power of life and death over his dependents.
Roman tradition ranked among its heroes some of
the heavier fathers, who did not hesitate to put
their own sons to death, for disloyalty to the
state. In practice, it seems that this absolute
authority was tempered by family councils, to
whom the gravest issues were referred. 63

Whether intentionally or not, Shakespeare invested his play
with more than just a casual flavoring of the Roman way.
Especially has he been faithful to capturing the spirit of
Roman pietas in his treatment of the dead.

Throughout all of Latin literature and history an
almost fanatical devotion to the dead can be detected.
Elaborate care was taken to provide for proper burial and
an untroubled afterlife. The Aeneid is filled with examples
of Aeneas fulfilling ritual obligations to the dead. 64
Significantly, Titus scarcely opens before Shakespeare thrusts
upon his audience an almost lavish burial spectacle. The
Romans recognized the cultural value of mourning in that it
gave grief form. "It transfers actual life to the sphere of
the drama. The nobler the deceased and the survivors are,
the more heroic the mourning." 65 Never was Roman mourning

63 Donald R. Dudley, The Civilization of Rome (New
64 See Footnote 57.
65 Huizinga, The Waning of the Middle Ages, p. 53.
considered a form of bathos.

These myth-ritual elements found in *Titus* obviously had a profound influence on both the writing and producing of the play. For practical reasons, it must be assumed that Shakespeare was aware of their potential for great drama and great theatre. Without doubt they influenced him and other playwrights because of this potential. The use of myth and ritual would seem to indicate that not only was the playwright aware of materials for an interesting and workable plot but also of the adaptability of those materials for his stage.

His play has been variously described as being a pageant, a morality play, a rhetorical sermon *cum* dumb show, a hodgepodge tragedy, a Senecan revenge play, and even a melodrama. Without denying the possibility of any or all of those being the case, a further question must be asked. Would it be possible to do all those things theatrically on the Elizabethan stage? Not only was it possible, but it was a matter of course. All of those forms survived into the sixteenth century and beyond, and their particular modes of production survived with them. In fact, the Elizabethan stage was preeminently suited to produce such a play as *Titus Andronicus*.

A few words should be said about the kind of stage that would accommodate the production of a play with as many diverse elements as *Titus*; for if a stage can accommodate such a play, much of the negative criticism toward *Titus*
has no relevance. The ultimate test of any dramatic work is its workability. The need arises for some indispensable tool in solving the problems of Titus's workability. That tool is George R. Kernodle's brilliant work, *From Art to Theatre*, in which he traces the relationship between the Elizabethan stage, the *tableaux vivants* and the Rederyker Stage of the Netherlands. The shared and borrowed elements made Shakespeare's stage especially capable of handling the problems of Titus. Moreover, audiences would have had no difficulty in understanding the implications of many events in the play simply because the theatrical conventions would have explained their significance. There was a manner and a means of expression on the stage of the late sixteenth century that would have allowed a playwright to present a story about the Roman world; to sermonize about the necessity of social virtue; to delight the eye and ear with the rituals of funerals, coronations, solemn feasts and hunts; and to startle, horrify, or astound the audiences with deeds seemingly unsuited to the stage. Outside his play Shakespeare relied for unity on the most synthetic stage in history. Inside his play he relied upon *pietas*: however, before the case can be made for *pietas*, some special mention should be made of major theatrical conventions and devices available to and suitable for Titus.

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Throughout the body of this work, references will be made to such devices to illustrate how many of the myth-ritual elements depend upon them for theatrical viability.

The large crowd scenes focusing on funerals, or coronations have prompted some critics to complain that *Titus* is an unwieldy play. Some critics have even gone so far as to call it a Renaissance pageant. Both positions contain within them certain elements of truth, but the Elizabethan stage was able to meet the challenge. The *tableaux vivants* provided a physical form for rhetorical speeches, emblematic staging, allegorical dramatizations, rituals (altar and tomb showpieces), and triumphal processions (triumphal arches). The *tableaux vivants* also conventionalized the concept of simultaneous staging, which becomes an essential directive in any production of *Titus*. Moreover, the dumb shows or pantomimes were established theatrical uses of Shakespeare's day. Of great importance in the *tableaux* was the direct address or rhetorical speech of a character before frozen action or pantomime, a practice highly suited to rendering the moral issues of the play. It was not uncommon for the *tableaux* to represent by means of emblems, symbols, and pictorial arrangements ideas and events from classical mythology and ancient history. Nor was it unusual to see living actors playing characters next to other actors playing abstract virtues and vices. In general the *tableaux vivants* served the purpose of establishing a place in which actors were shown off rather than providing a specific or defined setting. It was a
formalized and ritualized mechanism often employing bleeding pelicans and lambs, Scythians, Moors, Furies, dragons, monsters, serpents, and the whole range of Christian virtues.

The Rederyker Stage of the Netherlands contributed several important features to Shakespeare's stage. Most important was the blending of the theatricality of the **tableaux** with allegorical and symbolic theme plays (spelen van sinne). The theme plays discussed important political, intellectual, religious, and metaphysical problems. "At Rotterdam in 1598, one of the two themes plunged the playwrights into the important cultural question: 'Wherein are we to be extolled above the Romans?'"67 Those new morality plays were characterized by vivid picturization of virtue and vice, with a dominant speaker eloquently arguing the cause of some virtue using every rhetorical device available to him. Just as the **tableaux**, the Rederyker stage employed startling devices such as the descending machine, the bleeding crucifix, and a variety of emblematic figures. Very important to the development of continental theatre in the sixteenth century was the convention of mixing realism with allegory:

The sixteenth-century Flemish drama was dominated by these two tendencies: the desire to visualize—to present realistic pictures to the eye—and the tendency to symbolic, abstract thinking—to present type characters that illustrate a theme. Both the realism and the allegory we find in Flemish art.68

67Ibid., p. 116.  
68Ibid., p. 117.
It would seem that Shakespeare had the possibilities of his stage well in mind when he wrote *Titus Andronicus*.

William Shakespeare chose to call his play a Tragedy; judgment on that count of genre classification must be deferred for the time being. That *Titus* is a Lamentable tragedy becomes clear as the plot unfolds. Because of numerous incidents of pietic action occurring in the play, Shakespeare has clearly stamped *Titus* as a Roman tragedy. The possibility that *Titus* might be a great tragedy is remote. Its greatness, however, lies in the fact that in trying to be so many things, it succeeds as well as it does. The following chapters will attempt to demonstrate that much of the literary and theatrical success of *Titus* results from the influence of Roman pietas on the language, thought, and structure of the play.
CHAPTER II

TO THEIR BROTHERS' SPIRITS

Pietas as Praxis (Action) in Act I

Edith Hamilton has written that a tragedy gives man pleasure by showing him pain and that the intensity of the pleasure is determined by the intensity of the suffering and the terror of the events depicted.¹ On one count Titus Andronicus is more than satisfactory as tragedy. In fact, it has been viewed by many critics as the ultimate statement in dramaturgical pain-giving. Some critics have even commented wryly that it truly "out-herods Herod." Simply excelling in the showing of pain, however, has proven to be insufficient grounds for tragic effect. As Edith Hamilton has observed, "the tragic pleasure had no kinship with cruelty or the lust for blood."² To succeed as tragedy, a play must also show the significance of human life and the ability of man to suffer with dignity and to achieve heroic joy. Many arguments have been formulated that deny to Titus the fulfillment of the second condition. Actually, for the most part, those arguments seem inadequate. Their authors have placed undue attention on

²Ibid.
the external appearance of actions without correctly identifying the actual efficient cause of pain in *Titus*. In other words, too much emphasis has been placed on the argument that Titus’s suffering is not heroic because it was caused by horrendous deeds with the less-than-noble motivation of revenge.

The problem can be resolved by appealing to Aristotelian principles of drama. The use of Aristotelian principles or of even the terminology generally associated with his study of tragedy does not indicate any intention to prove that *Titus* is or is not an Aristotelian tragedy. The elements discussed in the *Poetics* were distilled from the best of things Greek and have remained sound dramatic principles through the ages. Whether Shakespeare knew them or not has no real significance here. On the other hand, they are principles that have consistently served artists and scholars for over two thousand years. Thus the Aristotelian system will simply provide a common ground upon which new judgments may be made concerning the play under discussion. The most important of the Aristotelian criteria to be applied to *Titus* is the element of plot. Aristotle concludes that the tragic action is the plot; and that through the plot, suffering and terror are best illustrated. Without the plot, there is no drama. In a sense, then, the plot (*mythos*) is the soul of tragedy and action (*praxis*) the soul of plot. Action, the psychic energy of a dramatic character working outward, forms the cause-and-effect relationships that give a plot its beginning, middle, and end. From this action flows the series of causally
related events that lead to the customary fall from happiness to unhappiness of the protagonist.

Without rejecting the place of sadness in tragedy, Miss Hamilton has called that state of unhappiness one of heroic joy; nevertheless, it is the action of the dramatic character that motivates or activates the plot. In other words, the dramatic character is the psychic agent of the action and such action expresses inner rational personality rather than purely external activity. That is, the external activity springs from an inward act of the will, which, in turn, elicits dramatic action. Such action may be totally depraved like that of a Herod or sublimely good like that of a completely virtuous man. The moral or social value of the action has no influence on the structural integrity of the plot. Rather, in a tragedy, it is the action, not the man, that is the object of imitation. That is the essence of theatre.

In *Titus*, the efficient cause of the plot is the virtue of *pietas*, not supine but actively engaged in the pursuit of its natural object: the fulfillment of filial, familial, and national obligations. The plot is advanced by the confrontation of *pietas* with various manifestations of personal and political evil. Neither refuses the meeting, and plot is born.

Before testing the efficacy of *pietas* on the plot in Act I of the play, two other theories must be examined: the traditional revenge thesis and an alternate thesis of
pietas as a symbolic or poetic motif. In 1960, Alan Sommers presented a brief study in *Essays in Criticism* in which he established a case for Roman piety. The thrust of his argument was this: the influence of *pietas* on the structure and thought of *Titus* is literary and symbolic rather than dramatic and real. Although Mr. Sommers's general conclusion is rejected within this dissertation study, his work must be credited with providing a significantly strong influence on the thrust of this study. The understanding of *pietas*, its influence on the plot, and the conclusions drawn herein are decidedly distinct from Sommers's. In fairness to Sommers and as a point of interest and possible debate for the reader, Sommers's basic argument is presented below:

The essential conflict in *Titus Andronicus* is the struggle between Rome, and all that it signifies in the European tradition to which we, and Shakespeare, belong, and the barbarism of primitive, original nature. It is this opposition which realises itself in the play's striking atmospheric contrasts. Both the opposing principles are indigenous to Shakespeare's world: a nature-bound vitality almost characterizes the poet's early work, while the Roman idea, pervasive in the historical plays and elsewhere, is fairly central, finally entwining itself with the thought of England's destiny in *Cymbeline*. A poetic conception, composite both of traditional and genuine classical values, as Roman 'virtue', 'justice', 'piety'—the words all recur significantly in *Titus Andronicus*—is in this earlier version threatened by forces of unregenerate barbarism, comprising natural gifts and some natural instinct, but constituting a specific reaction from civilization, religion, and humanity. The conflict resembles in some respects that of *Anthony and Cleopatra*, though there is no intertwining and sublimation as in the later play, and one side is strongly antipathetic. The opposition is stark, and the drama leaves
it unresolved. Nevertheless, a most interesting pattern of values becomes evident.

Sommers saw Titus as an unresolved morality play with the leitmotiv of pietas giving to the play a peculiarly symbolic quality. He never fully defined his term; however, he opened the door to a new approach to Titus.

The thesis that revenge is the key motivation to Titus has been proposed for many years. It relies heavily on two traditions: that Titus belonged to the school of the revenge plays and that the play was a descendant of the Senecan blood tragedies. Although great similarities exist between Titus and the plays of Kyd and Marston, there are major differences that begin in motivation. The revenge play is "a tragedy whose motive is revenge and whose main action deals with the progress of this revenge, leading to the death of the murderers, and often the death of the avenger himself." In Titus, disinterested pietas sets the play in motion and creates the central action. Acts of pietas cause personal

3Sommers, "'Wilderness of Tigers'," p. 276.
4Fredson Thayer Bowers, Elizabethan Revenge Tragedy 1587-1642 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1940), p. 62. Although frequent references are made herein to the revenge tragedy, it is not the purpose of this study to plow that ground again. In addition to F. T. Bowers' work on the subject, an important work that places special emphasis on Titus is Induction to Tragedy by Howard Baker (1939). Two recent works, though unpublished, have been invaluable for this study. They are J. E. Kramer's "The Revengeful City: A Study of Titus Andronicus" (Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1965) and Jeffrey Schwamberger's "The Aristotelian Structure of the Kydian Revenge Tragedy Formula."
enmity leading to acts of vindictiveness.

The formula for a revenge tragedy is relatively simple: a member of the revenger's immediate family is murdered in secret; the revenger discovers the murder and devised suitable revenge; the revenger then hesitates to act; he goes temporarily mad, consummated revenge, and commits suicide.\(^5\) Titus fails to fit the formula on several counts. The secret murder (rape) does not occur until late in the second act. The discovery of the secret murder does not cause the revenger (Titus) to devise suitable revenge. Titus's insanity has a special quality different from the temporary insanity of the traditional revenge here, and he does not commit suicide. Those differences do not necessarily prove the point that Titus is not a revenge tragedy, but they are in the text. Each of them will be fully discussed in its appropriate place.

Other important considerations must be kept in mind. Although Titus is the suffering here (traditional in the revenge tragedy) in Acts III and IV, he is not the typically patient protagonist at the beginning of the play. He is the major agent for action. Moreover, in a revenge tragedy the initial blow to the revenger's happiness comes through no fault of his own. Titus clearly brings his own tragic end upon himself from the very beginning.

\(^5\)Bowers, Elizabethan Revenge Tragedy, p. 62.
Titus has also been compared to the Senecan revenge tragedies in form and subject matter. While there are many similarities, there also appear several important differences. In addition, many of the similarities can easily be traced to other literary and dramatic sources. For example, the rambling, episodic structure owes much more to the native morality play than it does to Seneca's tight five-act construction. Macbeth is Senecan in structure; Titus is not. Other ways in which the play differs from the Senecan mold include a disregard for the unities of time, place, and action and the retention of Latin names for messengers (Nuntius, Aemilius)—a device common to medieval drama, not Senecan. In his Induction to Tragedy, Howard Baker presented an argument against attributing excessive Senecan influence on Titus. He indicated that much of the violence and bloodshed in Shakespeare could easily be traced to morality plays. Other scholars have traced such dramatic practices to the tableaux vivants, and Harriot Ely Fansler has indicated that "cycle and miracle plays presented slaughter and torture with admirable gusto." It seems that the bladder of vinegar has been a familiar stage property from the Middle Ages to the present.

Concerning the revenge motivation that is in the plot

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6 Howard Baker, Induction to Tragedy (University, Louisianna: Louisiana State University Press, 1939), pp. 140-151

of Shakespeare's play, it can be argued that the morality plays and the Chambers of Rhetoric had often personified Vindictiveness, Divine Correction, and Nemesis. That convention was common in the plays of the sixteenth century. That Senecan tones are heard in Titus cannot be denied; to say that the tone of Stoicism is Senecan seems gratuitous. Seneca's plays were not Stoical; they were concerned with vice. Virgil's epic was Stoical, and it was concerned with virtue, the virtue of pietas. The argument for revenge motivation in Titus has not been proven. At best, the revenge factors in Titus give it a theatrical unity and provide a motif of horror. The case for pietas remains to be proved.
SCENE I. Rome. Before the Senate House, the Tomb of the Andronici appearing.

Enter the Tribunes and Senators aloft. And then enter Saturninus and his Followers at one door, and Bassianus and his Followers with Drums and Trumpets at the other.

The play opens to the sound of drum and trumpet. It is the moment of an entry. Rome appears in all its pageantry and monumentality. This is an important moment, and there is no time for introductions. Within seconds the audience is confronted with a choice. Rome is to have a new head; and the candidates, sons of the recently deceased Emperor, recite their arguments to the gathered Tribunes and Senators. Against the tableaux of the Senate House and the Andronici Tomb with the entire world (for Rome was, by virtue of her greatness, the world) listening, Saturninus asks the patricians and his patrons to defend his claim with arms. On the other side the younger Bassianus pleads:

And suffer not dishonor to approach
The imperial seat, to virtue consecrate
To justice, continence, and nobility:
But let desert in pure election shine;
And, Romans, fight for freedom in your choice.

(14-18)

Already the play's poetry is focused on the ideals and virtues of the Roman culture. Whereas Saturninus asks only for war to gain his personal desires, Bassianus asks to preserve the freedom that Saturninus implicitly seeks to destroy. Both would cast Rome into a civil war at a time when she is fighting to preserve the boundaries of her Empire. Nonetheless, the rhetoric favors Bassianus. His is a speech
of piety. Saturninus would seem to favor usurping Roman potestas (power granted by general election and shared with the Senate).

No doubt this is one of the most theatrical and spectacular openings in all of Shakespeare, with its demands made upon the stage and the actors to create the glory and grandeur and the grim reality of a fading Empire. Against the marble vaults of the Senate House and the Tomb, these men and their followers stand separated only by the colors of their banners and fasces.

The structure of the play and the essence of the dramatic action is established in this opening sequence. The whole action develops from the basic conflict between the two brothers. The opposition is simply defined; there are two parties, good and evil, engaged in a debate. In a moment Marcus will appear as an arbiter. The tradition of the morality play and the Chambers of Rhetoric have more than a casual influence here; however, the moment is merely a prelude to a greater conflict. There is more than a symbolic juxtaposition of two ideals in these first eighteen lines. Saturninus speaks of "my right," "my cause," "my loving followers," and "my successive title" in trying to establish his claim to the crown.

Bassianus speaks for the republic, the empire, and anachronistically the medieval ideal of kingship. He also indicates the unworthiness of his brother by specifically implying that Saturninus is in some manner dishonorable.
Eventually this familial split will develop into a larger antagonism enveloping eventually the Andronici family. The problem of Roman integrity will become individuated in the pietic nature and actions of Titus himself.

Enter Marcus Andronicus, aloft, with the crown.

Marcus's entrance and speech present an early awkwardness in the play. He informs the princes that the people of Rome, "for whom we stand/A special party," have chosen by voice vote Titus as emperor. It would seem unlikely that this "common voice" had just spoken on the other side of the Forum and that the two brothers were unaware of it. More than likely, the gesture is made for the sake of the audience and as a preface to the first panegyric in the play: Marcus's speech about Titus. From a theatrical point of view, Marcus should enter with the main body at the beginning of the play and stand prominently displayed ready to "enter" the action. The awkwardness of this entrance could easily be resolved by having, at the very beginning of the play, the ensemble sweep onto the stage with shouts and cries as if in response to the voice vote. The opening speeches would then have a frame of reference.

The playwright has now established the important political conflict. He then turns the action over to the characters. The playwright's final words in the prologue characterize the hero, who, though not speaking for himself, stands between and above the contesting factions. Such a position will be the cause of his misfortune and his tragic
glory. In Marcus's words Titus appears as the quintessential Roman. His given name has been exchanged for the surname "Pius" (line 24). It is also the surname attached to the founder of Rome, the legendary Aeneas. Marcus's speech contains within it all that is needed to know and understand the greatness and potential tragedy of a man:

A nobler man, a braver warrior
Lives not this day within the city walls.

(26-27)

Titus is established as the greatest man and bravest fighter in Imperial Rome. His greatness is not limited to Rome: for city walls, understand the boundaries of the Empire. Rome, the Eternal City, was the world. Marcus continues his exposition of Titus's background:

He by the Senate is accited home
From weary wars against the barbarous Goths,
That, with his sons, a terror to our foes,
Hath yoked a nation strong, trained up in arms.

(28-31)

Marcus establishes not only Titus's greatness but also that of his sons. Titus is a military man, first and foremost. He can kill and he has trained his sons to kill. The Andronici are the archetypal Roman family; and, like the great heroes of the past, they have spent the mythological ten years away from home at the wars:

Ten years are spent since he undertook
This cause of Rome, and chastised with arms
Our enemies' pride: Five times he hath returned
Bleeding to Rome, bearing his valiant sons
In coffins from the field.

(32-36)

And finally Titus is presented as the epitome of pietic action.
In bringing his dead home for burial, he has paid his dues to his country and his family.

In his first great rhetorical statement of the play, Marcus established himself as the peacemaker and a spokesman for reason and the sense of Roman tradition. He begs for honor, peace, and humility. More than anything else, he sets the stage for the entrance of Titus, who may be more than human, almost a Titan as his name implies. He may be even larger than the play allows. As will be seen, his character will overpower the framework of the play and at times almost escape definition.

Since Titus is to enter in a few moments, extra stage time is needed to provide for some semblance of verisimilitude. The debate continues between the two brothers while Marcus silently presides. He has served his purpose well. He has provided the audience with the needed information about Titus and has revealed his own impotence as a leader. This theatrically necessary moment is made even more interesting by the use of the rhetoric of the courtroom. Saturninus displays his less than pietic nature by dissembling. He shows not only a lack of courtesy, but also a wily and Machiavellian pragmatism by not addressing the elder Marcus by name. When he answers Marcus's plea for peace, the single line is filled with sarcasm: "How fair the Tribune speaks to calm my thoughts" (line 47). There is both suppressio veri (suppression of the truth) and suggestio falsi (suggestion of a lie) in his words. In no way are his thoughts calmed; further events will testify
to that. His choice of the word "fair" suggests that Saturninus may be complimenting Marcus for speaking justly. Rather, he is simply commenting sarcastically about Marcus's ability to speak well. There is no acceptance of the will of the people within Saturninus's soul. Indeed, he wants justice only for himself. There is no hint of self-sacrifice or pietas there.

When Bassianus answers Marcus's request, he reveals his youth and naivete. Not only does he submit his will to the will of Marcus and the people of Rome, but he also reveals his nobility of soul to all those present. He loves and honors the Andronici; he especially loves Lavinia. His deference to the Andronici comes from his love of and respect for Lavinia. Bassianus emerges as the courtly knight of the Middle Ages swearing allegiance to his liege lord and obeisance to his lady love. Such anachronisms abound in the play. There is no real doubt as to which of the two brothers is the more noble, just as there is no match between them politically. Bassianus will submit his caused to be "weighed"; Saturninus will commit himself to the cause.

Flourish. Saturninus and Bassianus go up into the Senate House.

In this opening sequence Shakespeare has presented the argument. What is Roman justice and who best exemplifies it? Already it is a major theme in the play. The overlay of Medieval and Machiavellian attitudes makes the theme more cosmic than surface appearances reveal. What is justice? The answer to
that question comes from the remainder of the play.

Enter Captain.

As the stage clears of some of the participants, a Roman Captain enters to begin another eulogy to the good Andronicus. Titus is again characterized as the "patron of virtue" and "Rome's best Champion" (line 68). Here then the cycle is complete. Titus is the choice of the people, the Tribunes (Marcus), and the military. The stage is now set for a triumphal and triumphant entry.

Sound drums and trumpets; and then enter two sons of Titus. Martius and Mutius; and then two Men bearing a coffin covered with black; then two other Sons Lucius and Quintus; then Titus Andronicus and then Tamora the Queen of Goths with her son Alarbus and her two sons Chiron and Demetrius, with Aaron the Moor, and others as many as can be. They set down the coffin, and Titus speaks.

The demands of such an entrance upon the physical limits of the stage are substantial. At one and the same time the stage must accommodate a funeral procession and a victorious army returning from the wars. The first words of Titus give the best clue to an interpretation of the scene: "Hail, Rome, victorious in the mourning weeds" (line 74). It is more important to Titus that Rome mourn her losses than celebrate her victory. The inspiration for such a moment can be found in the elaborate staging of the altar and tomb showpieces combined with the triumphal arches of the tableaux vivants.\(^9\)

\(^9\)Kernodle, From Art to Theatre, pp. 52-108.
Titus begins with an apostrophe to Rome. He does not greet the people and he takes no recognizance of the assembled Senators and Tribunes. His obsession with Rome is clearly characterized by his first words in the play. It is the posture of a war-weary general who has dedicated his life to the good of his country. Titus reveals his patriotism to a Rome idealized by years of absence. There is no symbolism hero. In his mind, symbol has become reality; and just as his patriotism has transformed a human construct into a unit for worship, so his pietas will transform him into petrified virtue. Thas is not the only metamorphosis. The honored dignitary of the triumphal entry has actually entered into the tableaux itself.

Titus is all and more than that he has been described to be. He has known the sting of death, and it penetrates into his every statement. In the rhetoric of a dispassionate and disinterested ruler, he compares himself to a ship returning home to port. His words, his images, even his feelings are models of oxymoronic rhetoric. A figurative and rhetorical element becomes personified in Titus. His "tears of true joy" (line 80) foreshadow the pleasure in the pain of tragedy. The potential for tragic pride and blindness resides within the words and actions of the sorrowing soldier and father. Titus reveals a less than admirable pride in his choice of the ship simile; for to the Roman mind and throughout history, the poetic relationship between the ship and the state was always maintained. Titus seems to be identifying himself with the
state in this instance. Then true to the Roman ideal, Titus calls upon Jupiter to "Stand gracious to rites" (line 82) that he intends to perform. His calling upon the god shows how important it was for Titus to maintain the intimate connection between the state and its (his) piety toward the gods. For a military person that was a special obligation since the state gods were the special guarantors of military success upon which the security of Rome depended. The gods thus had special meaning for the army. That notion was so strong that in the time of Diocletian, Licinus, and Julian, Christians were expelled from the army. ¹⁰

The note of pietas within the petition to Jupiter emphasizes the importance of the burial ritual in the Roman culture and religion. Titus thus makes his first action in Rome one of prayer and piety. He establishes the fact that he believes in a moral and mythological order above all else. The first important action in the play is one of pietas incorporated into a ritual. The necessities of burial here foreshadow the necessity of death itself. The play will become a series of ritual supplications, deaths, and burials before pietas rests.

In his next breath Titus is unable to prevent pride from making him remind those gathered together of his relationship to mythic Rome, to the Trojan war, and implicitly to Aeneas. He speaks of his sons as "Half of that number that

¹⁰Scott, Histories of Tacitus, p. 43.
King Priam had" (line 84). Just as Titus has brought the remains of his dead to Rome to be buried, so too did Aeneas bring the *Penates* (ashes) of his ancestors to the new Troy. However, Titus blames himself for being unkind and careless in his duty since he had waited so long to bury his sons. Is there in Titus an obsession with duty? He could have buried his sons on the battlefield. He chose to wait and bring them to Rome. Did he hope that a Roman burial in the family tomb would be more fitting, more pietic; or did he delay the burial in order to have the opportunity to make this special entrance onto the streets of Rome? Both pride in and an excess of personal virtue are those things that ultimately lead to the destruction of virtue. From whatever cause, Titus has prevented the souls of his sons from crossing the Styx; and he is unable to accept for himself the guilt that comes from impiety. Such guilt is special to ascetics and saints aspiring to the contemplative life. The posture suits a Marcus Aurelius but not a general like Titus. It is his obsession with perfection that will lead Titus to destroy himself and his family and to place Rome in danger of collapse.

With the internment of the coffin, the action slows for a ritual burial. The key to the ritual is the phrase "sleep in peace" (line 95), which recurs in variant forms throughout the play. Since the ritual moment clearly dominates the action, several considerations should be made about the staging of the burial. It is difficult to know what Shakespeare meant by the word "coffin." Since he indicates in the stage
directions that it is to be covered with a black cloth, he may have intended the use of the conventional Christian coffin with the black shroud of mourning. On the other hand, for a more theatrical and spectacular effect, the traditional Roman convention might be adopted here. The body of the deceased was cremated and the ashes preserved in an urn shaped like his body. Hovering near the urn was the manes or soul of the deceased who lived separate from the ashes. Shakespeare speaks of a single coffin, but Titus speaks of several dead sons. For a more dramatic effect, the Roman convention should probably be used. Titus’s prayers to the dead and to the tomb itself also serve as reminders of his tendency to move away from the reality before him into an ultra-real world decorated by poetry and rhetoric. It is a poignant and dramatic moment:

There greet thee in silence, as the dead are wont,  
And sleep in peace, slain in your country's wars!  
O sacred receptacle of my joys,  
Sweet cell of virtue and nobility,  
How many sons hast thou of mine in store  
That thou wilt never render to me more!  

(94-99)

Titus grants his suffering soul and his exhausted loins the mythic stature of Priam. Coming as it does upon his self-accusation of a sin of omission, that statement makes clear one very important factor: Titus is a human being aware of his suffering humanity.

Even before Titus finishes his prayer and before the rites of internment can be performed, Lucius interrupts him with a request for a sacrifice to the spirits of the dead
brothers:

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.
(100-105)

The key to the interpretation of this speech cannot be found either in the person requesting, the person granting the request, or in the person to be sacrificed. All of those factors add immeasurably to the drama of the moment, but none of them controls the causation of plot. It is here that ritual, myth literature, and history merge into art.\textsuperscript{11}

Sacrifice to the dead was an essential part of the ritual of burial. Most commonly a pig was the sacrificial victim, but human sacrifice was not unknown. The sacrifice served several purposes. It propitiated the gods, asked for safe journeys to the afterworld, and eased the concerns of the soul of the dead. Actually the manes to whom Lucius referred were more than just souls. The Romans believed that after the cremation of the body, the spirit of the dead person emerged from the ashes into its afterlife, hopefully to enter Elysium. The journey of the dead was possible only after

\textsuperscript{11}Much of the detail concerning Roman religion has been summarized for purposes of brevity. The major points relevant to this study have been synthesized from the works of Virgil himself and the historian Tacitus. Secondary sources of excellent scholarship are Russell Scott's Religion and Philosophy in the Histories of Tacitus and Cyril Bailey's Religion in Virgil (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1935).
proper sacrifice.

The manes resided in the urn until sacrifice was made. They also wandered about the earth hoping to find someone to make sacrifice for them. Often if sacrifice was not made, the manes was capable of causing ominous disturbances on earth. Once sacrifice was made, the person could die in peace. The Aeneid is replete with examples. One of the most striking concerns Aeneas's helmsman Palinurus, who is drowned and never properly buried until Aeneas descends to the Underworld. Perhaps Titus has, in his grief, forgotten about the necessary sacrifice. If so, it is a curious oversight on his part. On the other hand it introduces Lucius as the pietic counterpart of Titus. It could be conceived that Titus felt sacrifice had already been made. The war dead, by extension, could be considered collectively to be the sacrificial victim. More than likely, Shakespeare simply provided the speech to introduce Lucius (Latin for brighter, more brilliant, more light) in an initial act of pietas. Besides, for structural purposes, someone other than Titus was needed to move the plot forward in that manner. There would be little drama in Titus's simply interrupting his prayer to look for a victim.

Titus accedes to Lucius's request. There is a tradition for human sacrifice, especially with respect to national heroes. Aeneas sacrificed young boys on two separate occasions to propitiate the spirits of the dead. In his approval, Titus may have recalled that the gods had often sent plagues to warn the living of their duty to the dead. He is also
quite aware of the magnitude of the act. There is no lust for blood here. His pietas speaks with sorrow to Tamora, calling her a "distressed queen" (line 107). Titus has known the sorrow of losing his children also. It is his way of fulfilling the ritual obligation of appeasing the dead. From that action the tragedy comes. It is the real praxis of the plot. Suffering, death, and tragic loss result ultimately from the act. The irony throughout the play is that Titus does not recognize his instrumentality for tragic grief until it is too late. In that way, Titus resembles Macbeth, with its special irony of supernatural prophecy.

Tamora's response to the loss of her eldest son is not predictable. Instead of an expected sharp outcry of protest against Titus's decision, she holds the stage in a lengthy speech that shows displeasure and grief but neither anger nor vindictiveness. Shakespeare repeats that technique as a pattern throughout the play. Instead of the expected response, he provides his actors with special rhetorical statements that serve a variety of dramatic purposes. In this instance, stage time is created in order for the horror of the decision to subside before the horror of the sacrifice arises. It also helps to create tension in the audience with the expectation of violence, and it gives a noble picture of the Queen of the Goths. It is also an opportunity to see Titus in a different light. Here no Roman speaks. It is the voice of a hated enemy. It is another panegyric that reminds Titus of his duties of Roman justice and pietas as a conquerer.
Was not one of the glories of Rome the Romanity she offered to her defeated enemies? Tamora softly entreats her "Roman brethren" (line 108) to soften his heart with thoughts of his own losses. She raises the question whether Titus is honoring his dead sons or fulfilling a ritual according to some blind sense of propriety. Tamera, who will become one of the most degenerate personalities in later scenes, raises a crucial moral issue. Titus could have chosen another way. She reminds Titus that he is reaching for the heights of the gods in his decision. In effect, Tamora makes it clear that she recognizes the virtue of Roman piety. Not for a second does she indicate that she feels Titus's decision is an act of revenge. Thus, Titus is presented with the opportunity to pull back from tragedy. Another noble person, a queen, has asked without guile for mercy:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Sweet mercy is nobility's true badge} \\
\text{Thrice-noble Titus, spare my first-born son.}
\end{align*}
\]

(123-124)

Has Tamera implied in her pleas for mercy that she would relinquish something or someone else? The audience is never to know. Titus is about to fail the test.

Titus simply asks the grieved queen to be patient with the facts of Roman religion:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Patient yourself, madam, and pardon me.} \\
\text{These are their brethren, whom your Goths beheld} \\
\text{Alive and dead: and for their brethren slain} \\
\text{Religiously they ask a sacrifice.} \\
\text{To this your son is marked, and die he must} \\
\text{T' appease their groaning shadows that are gone.}
\end{align*}
\]

(125-130)

Titus is resolved within himself, and Lucius hastily orders
the execution by sword and fire. Although Lucius may appear unfeeling at this moment, he cannot be accused of acting vindictively. His error is one of youthful impetuosity. Meanwhile he provides additional color and ritual to the expected sacrifice with his apparent relish for the job ahead.

Exeunt Titus' sons with Alarbus.

Lucius's exit allows Tamora to speak one of the most memorable lines in the play:

Oh, cruel, irreligious piety!
(line 135)

It is a sigh fraught with all the contradictions and distinctions of a philosopher's metaphysics. It is the kind of ethical problem offered for resolution by the Chambers of Rhetoric and the Inns of Court. Shakespeare argues the point dramatically throughout the entire course of the play. Such pietas can be and has been viewed as part of the revenge ethics of Roman justice. That has often been the case in previous analyses of Titus, but such an approach omits some fundamental considerations about the nature of virtue. Virtue is defined solely by the objective of the habitual action and the intention of the agent. Medieval and Renaissance philosophers and theologians debated that point under the heading of objective and subjective morality. In essence, then, Titus's actions at this point do

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12 In his dissertation "The Revengeful City: A Study of Titus Andronicus," Joseph E. Kramer argues from linguistics rather than historical evidence that Roman piety was institutionalized revenge. He finds Titus's actions have a certain complex irony but no religious or moral motivation.
not participate in a revenge ethics. In fact, if his actions are to be considered in such a light, they must be judged outside the context of the Roman cult of the dead and removed from the personality of Titus as hereto presented. Such judgment denies the dramatic tradition of the medieval morality play, the theme play, and the rhetorical debate of the sixteenth century. Titus's act was not just the physical act of a man; it was a conscious human act with knowledge and intention of good. Relegating Titus's action to that of the revenge ethics limits both the moral and dramatic value of the play, and, in a sense, dismisses centuries of historical tradition as no more than pedantic speculation. Pietas is more than a word: its existence as Roman virtue needs no further proof.

The next exchange of speeches provides an interesting problem for the stage director. While Alarbus is being roasted, what is happening on the stage? The Andronici have apparently returned to their burial rites and prayers while Demetrius and Chiron comfort their mother. Since there is so little dialogue, some stage action must be invented to allow time for the execution and burning of Alarbus—enough of a burning so that the smoke of the sacrificed entrails might be seen from offstage. The enormity of the moment can be greatly stressed for dramatic purposes; and it gives Shakespeare time to introduce the cubs of Tamora, who speak, for the time being, like Roman lads. They compare Rome to Scythia, known for its barbarity. Their own sense of family is outraged. Most
interesting, though, is the allusion made to the Trojan war. Even Titus's enemies find an analogy between the victorious Roman general and Aeneas. At this point Demetrius vows revenge. He reacts to the situation in the only way expected. As a Goth it is his tribal and family duty to seek faida. This particular turn in the plot does not give the play a new causality. It merely prepares for those revengeful actions to come as a result of the initial act of pietas.

Enter the sons of Andronicus again, with their swords bloody.

It is the moment of burial: solemn, dignified, and tinged with a touch of primitive savagery. The participants probably carried flowers and banners and swung incense burners; hieratic chant filled the air.

Sound trumpets, and lay coffins in the tomb.

Again Titus prays for peace and honor and rest. The dialogue

13 Demetrius hopes for the assistance from the same gods who helped Queen Hecuba of Troy take revenge on King Polymnestor. Polymnestor had murdered Hecuba's son, Polydorus. In revenge she plucked out Polymnestor's eyes and then killed his children. Demetrius apparently hopes to treat Titus in the same manner. The myth analogue that pertains here is related to an incident in the travels of Aeneas. By mistake, Aeneas desecrates the grave of Polydorous and must perform the proper rites to the disturbed manes. The analogy is subliminal but supportive of the general thesis.

14 J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, The Barbarian West, pp. 53-58. The Germanic habit of vendetta or faida (seeking vengeance) was a constant source of trouble to the Empire and the early Christian Church. Wallace-Hadrill has indicated that the Church saved some Germanic tribes from suicide by suppressing the practice of vendetta.
resolves itself into a ritual form so artificial and rhetorical that it can safely be assumed to be an attempt at chant, dirge, or lament. The technique is repeated frequently, especially in Act II. Twice now has Titus spoken thus:

In peace and honor rest you here, my sons;
Rome's readiest champions, repose you here in rest,
Secure from worldly chance and mishaps!
Here lurks no treason, here no envy swells,
Here grow no damned drugs, here are no storms,
No noise, but silence and eternal sleep.
In peace and honor rest you here, my sons.

(154-160)

Enter Lavinia.

Rather than indicating that Lavinia enters, the stage direction should probably read that she approaches. Under the circumstances it would seem only fitting and theatrical for her to have been present from the beginning of the play with an entourage of family retainers. Thus she could have been clearly identified by Bassianus and have been preeminently positioned for the triumphal entry of her father. Her address to Titus closes the funeral rite:

In peace and honor live Lord Titus long!

(line 161)

By inverting the funeral prayer into a greeting, Shakespeare poetically ties together the living and the dead in a ritual greeting of piety. The continuum remains intact. The question that lurks on the edge of the mind is one of artistic intention. Did Shakespeare intend his audience to hear the inversion, and on hearing, consider the possibility of Lavinia foreshadowing Titus's death. Such conjecture has almost no foundation in fact, but it presents the director and
the actress playing Lavinia an extra alternative with which to play the scene. Lavinia's speech is a model of filial piety and affection. She maintains the pattern of eulogies in Titus's return, Lavinia obviously speaks rhetorically. Real tears would have been un-Andronican; poetical tears reveal pietas. That is sufficient for the occasion. She concludes her greeting with a most important wish:

O, bless me here with thy victorious hand,
Whose fortutunes Rome's best citizens applaud.

(167-168)

She lifts the play out of mourning to celebrate the Roman victory and introduces the element of fortune.

Much has been written about the Roman concept of fortune (fortuna) and its symbiotic relationship to fate (fatum).¹⁵ Scholars are generally agreed that the two are mutually inclusive. Virgil himself blurs the edges of the two and blends them into one in the Aeneid. In fact, he uses the word fortuna frequently to mean nothing more than bad luck, fate, or tragic destiny. The normal meaning of the word fortuna is 'luck' or 'chance'. Its Greek equivalent is Τυχή. Lucretius thought of fortune as some swerve in the order of nature that produced an exceptional or abnormal result. That seems to be the undefined middle ground upon which poets and dramatists have established their epics and plays: that is, a shifting and ironic sense of chance in the activities of man.

¹⁵ For a more complete discussion of the concepts of Roman fortune and fate, consult Scott's Histories of Tacitus and Cyril Bailey, Religion in Virgil, passim.
The Roman sense of fortune or fate, however, always presupposed that the two lurked together on the fringes of all of man's actions. Thus, when Lavinia wishes upon herself blessings from her father whose "fortunes Rome's best citizens applaud," a hint of the eventual tragedy is given. Little are the personages of the drama aware of the awful irony in Lavinia's wish. The irony becomes more obvious later when Rome's leading citizens such as Saturninus and Tamera (Roman by marriage) applaud Titus's bad fortune.

As the second significant section of Act I draws to a conclusion, Titus responds to his daughter in Virgilian tones. He becomes warm and tender for a moment in his obvious love for Lavinia; however, the destiny of Rome haunts his words:

Lavinia, live, outlive thy father's days
And fame's eternal date, for virtue's praise.

(171-172)

Lavinium was the land to which Aeneas had come and out of which he fashioned the city which was to become Rome. Lavinia, for whom this land was named, was Aeneas's second wife and the human mother of the Roman race. Titus's Lavinia is his 'second wife' and alter uxor, and the potential mother of a new age of Titans. To Titus, Lavinia is Rome, the eternal mother of political, social, and familial virtue. In this portion of the play, at least, the multiplying ironies are reminiscent of Sophocles's Oedipus The King.

With Titus's speech, the first great action of the play is concluded. What has transpired to this point is especially important for its influence on the rest of the plot. The
ritual ceremony has served several purposes, among which was
the renewal of life in Rome through the renewal of the spirit
of Titus and the Andronici. Rituals in general and especially
funeral rituals "serve to produce not merely 'imitation' but
to animate, revive, re-awaken feeling of life." Dramatically
Titus parallels the brief moment in Macbeth when Macbeth says:

Duncan's in his grave
After life's fitful fever he sleeps well;
Treason has done his worst: nor steel nor poison
Malice domestic, foreign levy, nothing,
Can touch him further.

(3. 2)

The special touch of Shakespearean irony is not lost here.

Enter above Marcus Andronicus and
Tribunes; and Saturninus and Bassianus,
attended.

The greeting between Marcus and Titus, brothers who have
lived through many of Rome's crises, is brief and manly.
Time is wasting; there is business to be transacted. Titus
has been called home by the Senate. He certainly must know
what the people have decided, but now Marcus must make the
announcement of Titus's candidacy to Titus himself. It is a
moment of great meaning to the entire Roman world. Although
Marcus satisfies the bonds of courtesy, he oversteps the
bounds of patience. He becomes garrulous in a manner
reminiscent of a later Polonius. Royal advisers share a common
lot in Shakespearean drama. They never know when to stop

16 Vincent Hopper and Gerald Lahey, eds., Medieval
Mystery Plays, Morality Plays, and Interludes (Woodbury,
speaking. For that reason, the first part of Marcus's speech should be interpreted as a kind of character charade. It makes the offer to Titus anticlimatic. The audience already knows anyway.

In what is perhaps the greatest test of his piety, Titus is presented with a personal and moral dilemma. Can a man who has so thoroughly identified himself with the Roman state rule it with the equanimity required of a pietic emperor? In attempting to tread the golden mean of virtue, he fails in both ways: by excess in placing too high a demand upon pietas and by defect by finding too little virtue in himself. An inexplicable blindness has permitted his greatest strength to force him into inaction. He declines. His speech is a schoolman's exemplum of the unresolved disputatio:

A better head her glorious body fits
Than this that shakes for age and feebleness.
What should I don this robe and trouble you?
Be chosen with proclamation today,
Tomorrow yield up to rule, resign my life,
And set abroad new business for you all?
Rome, I have been thy soldier forty years,
And led my country's strength successfully,
And buried one-and-twenty valiant sons,
Knighted in field, slain manfully in arms,
In right and service of their noble country.
Give me a staff of honor for mine age,
But not a scepter to control the world.
Upright he held it, lords, that held it last.
(192-205)

It is the beginning of the end for Titus. Nowhere else in the play is such poetic language employed to delineate beauty of character and philosophical ideal. Titus is a tragic figure speaking. No melodrama floods into the speech. It is virtue operating with wit and wisdom, reason and reserve.
Titus sees clearly, but only for a moment. His speech expresses neither arrogance nor personal blindness. Pietas, speaking through Titus yearns for the perfect world in which to operate. To rule or not to rule becomes academic; in fact, the governing of Rome gets lost in the metaphysics of the moment. Titus stands on the heights and looks upon the universe. He must decline. Only a lesser man would have aquiesced.

There is no way to explain Titus's choice of Saturninus other than as an act of pietas. Dramatically it is necessary in order to guarantee the tragic outcome, for it will ultimately establish the forces of evil in Rome. All things indicate that Bassianus would be more suitable, but the choice of a king is one that has plagued societies for centuries because of the tradition of "successive title" (line 4). Titus's dilemma was a familiar one to Shakespeare's audience. In fact much of England's civil disorder during the sixteenth century revolved around the right of succession. Primogeniture was also a tradition in Rome, one that Titus could not violate because of pietas. For political and dramatic reasons Shakespeare chose Saturninus. The poetic framework for the choice parallels Marcus's speech offering Titus the crown. Shakespeare there utilized a pattern of rhetorical amplification in order to stretch the time factor. He also incorporates that important stylistic device in Titus's speech naming Saturninus Emperor. That important amplificatory device becomes especially important as a means of dealing with the horrors of the later scenes.
The choice of Saturninus is no secret except to the unobservant; however, Saturninus tries to precipitate the moment and in doing so fortifies the awareness of his unworthiness. Again Bassianus asks only for justice. Then in a moment of garrulity, Titus asks from the people of Rome their "voices and suffrages" (line 224). It is a small sin of distrust caused by overweening piety. Rome is already his. He is more than emperor; he is kingmaker and for a moment like unto the gods. Unlike the gods, however, Titus qualifies his decision with the hope that Saturninus's virtues will

Reflect on Rome as Titan's rays on earth
And ripen justice in this commonweal.  
(231-232)

The hope of Titus is fraught with incredible implications for Titus, Rome, Shakespeare's audience, and anyone else truly interested in the significance of the play.

A long flourish till they come down.

Saturninus must ironically lower himself physically to accept the crown from Titus. In this action a director has countless opportunities for symbolic and emblematic staging. For such a moment to succeed theatrically, it must be even more triumphal and ritualistic than anything preceeding it. This is a moment at which the drama must go forward. Titus has prevented the tragic action from aborting itself. *Jacta est alia.* The

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17"Jacta est alia." "The die is cast." These words are attributed to Julius Caesar when he crossed the Rubicon against orders from Rome. Caesar meant that civil war was inevitable.
The basic plot of the play has now been created; and the protagonist has been established as Titus, whose actions are motivated by a special kind of Roman pietas. His virtue has established a power in Rome that is inimical to him. Rome has been divided into two parts with conflicting ethics: the traditional duty-honor-patriotism protected by the law versus ambition-deception-absolutism fostered by caprice. Shortly, another act of piety will establish the subplot and merge it into the major action; but that is to come.

Of great importance here is the symbolic significance of Saturninus's being chosen Emperor. Whether in the science of astrology or in the literature of mythology, Saturn has always been considered the most maligned of beings. In astrology the planet Saturn is considered to have the effect of making those born under its sign sluggish, gloomy, morose, grave, and taciturn. In mythology Saturn (Cronus) was responsible for castrating his father (Uranus). There is every reason to believe that Shakespeare was familiar with myths, legends, and astrological writings about Saturn. To say that those things have a direct influence on the play is speculation; to say that an understanding of these things provides greater insight into the play is understating the case. The discussion of the play must be interrupted at this point for the sake of legend and mythology.
In Hesiod's *Theogony*, the story of Saturn is told. Saturn was born of the primordial Earth Mother (Gaea) and Heaven (Uranus) as one of nine children, including Oceanus, Phoebe, Tethys, and the one-eyed Cyclops. Of all those, Saturn (Cronus) was the youngest and most terrible. Cronus hated his father Uranus; and, at the instigation of his mother, he castrated Uranus with a jagged sickle. From the bloody drops of the genitals, Gaea conceived the Furies, Giants, and Nymphs. Cronus himself devoured his own children (born of Rhea) for fear of being overcome by his own son. When, however, his son Zeus was born, Rhea hid him in a cave. In his place she presented Cronus with a stone wrapped in a blanket. Cronus immediately swallowed his supposed son. When Zeus grew to manhood, he conquered Cronus, who spewed up the stone and all of his children. Zeus also released from beneath the earth the brothers of Cronus, who gave him the thunderbolt and lightning by which he ruled. Zeus, or Jupiter as he was known to the Romans, whose name means bright, was the giver of light and rain, two essentials of life and growth. In establishing his supremacy, Zeus (Jupiter) followed the pattern of the solar system in which Saturn was the second largest planet and Jupiter the largest.

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18 Much of the mythological material contained within this study has been synthesized from the standard sources such as Hesiod's *Theogony*, Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, and Virgil's *Aeneid*. Secondary sources include Michael Grant's *Myths of the Greeks and Romans*, Bulfinch's *Mythology* and *The Larousse Encyclopedia of Mythology*. 
Coincidentally, Lucius in *Titus Andronicus*, supercedes Saturn in power at the end of the play. Lucius's name translated from the Latin means brighter. Moreover, the machinations of the court of Saturninus are gloomy, dark, and morose; Lucius promises better. Not to be forgotten is the fact that Heaven (Uranus) was ironically the father of monsters. Titus, himself, in his aspiration toward divine or celestial virtue similarly fathers monsters in Rome.

After his defeat by Zeus, Cronus is said in one story to have gone to Italy where he reigned as king in a primitive golden age. Another story has Cronus going to a remote holy island near Britain. It is worthy of note that Britain's first king was named Lucius. The analogies multiply. Saturn's (Cronus's) mythological kingship of Italy in its primitive Golden Age appears to have been the root cause of the development of a Saturnalia cult that celebrated the winter solstice in general feasting and revelry. Early Christian leaders instituted the feast of Christmas as a substitute celebration to prevent new converts from participating in the orgiastic ceremonies of the Saturnalia. Virgil apparently saw or understood a different sort of Saturn. His writing is filled with the "mystical belief in Italy—Saturnia tellus (a golden land) as the most favored land for agriculture, where food and crops, horses, cattle, and men could all reach perfection."¹⁹ Doubtless a metamorphosis had taken place, for even Titus seems

to share Virgil's opinion. In Shakespeare's own time, two very popular works on astrology discuss the influences for good and evil of the planet Saturn on the body politic. The only conclusion that can be drawn from all of this material is that the ideas certainly had some influence on the composition of Titus Andronicus. One point must be remembered: the Titan and the planet are separate entities.

One other idea plays an important role in the understanding of the mythological analogue between the god Saturn and the new Emperor Saturninus. In the fourth century B.C., the Sicilian philosopher Euhemerus popularized the doctrine (euhemerism) that the gods of mythology were actually deified mortals and that the myths were based upon traditional accounts of real people and events. Such a theory was sufficient to explain the kingship of Saturn during the legendary Golden Age. At the same time, the virgin Goddess of Justice, Astraea, also dwelt on the earth. When the corruptions of men had brought the Golden Age to an end, Astraea withdrew from earth and went to heaven to live with the gods. At the time of Shakespeare, it was a commonplace to refer politically and

20 Joseph Kramer establishes much of his secondary argument for revenge on these two works in his dissertation, "The Revengeful City." They are listed as follows: Fraunce, Abraham. The Third part of the Countesse of Pembrokes Yuychurch: Entituled, Amintas Dale. Wherein are the most conceited tales of the Pagan Gods in English Hexameters: together with their auncient descriptions and Philosophicall explications. By ABRAHAM FRAVNCE.
symbolically to Elizabeth as Astraea. In the play, Titus hopes for justice in the reign of Saturninus; he does not realize that he has confused the planet Saturn with the euhemeristic one. Later he bemoans his mistake and weeps because Astraea has left the earth.

The plot of Titus is reversed with the crowning of Saturninus. No longer can Titus hold forth in Rome with power and authority. He has officially relinquished it. Tragically, he remains emotionally unable to free himself from the sense of kingship. Whether from blindness or pride, he continues to act as a kind of god-like king because of his love for Rome and his fear for her safety. In his self-anointed role as holy Roman Emperor, he has inaugurated a new Golden Age. No longer can tragedy be averted.

In his first action as Emperor, Saturninus displays his autocratic inclinations and reveals the kind of Machiavellian conceit to be associated later with Richard III and Macbeth. He offers to do good things for the Andronici, even marry Lavinia, a step calculated to unite him to Rome's most powerful political and military family. His proposal smacks of cunning, conceit, and duplicity:

And, for an onset, Titus, to advance
Thy name and honourable family,
Lavinia will I make my Empress,
Rome's royal mistress, mistress of my heart,

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21 Frances A. Yates, "Queen Elizabeth as Astraea," Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes, X (1947); 27-82.
And in the sacred Pantheon her espouse.

(244-248)

A new voice is heard in Rome. Unlike Titus's it does not ask for the voice of the people. Potestas is new singular and unilateral. It is a voice that dictates. It will advance the Andronici family in favor—a favor not necessarily wanted by the family. It will espouse Lavinia—an espousal not desired. It will hearken to the Pantheon, the sacred storehouse of the gods, and deify itself. The Golden Age has begun, and Saturninus's use of the word mistress foreshadows future dominance of Tamora. Reversals come quickly in Titus, so quickly that the dramatic pattern must be intentional. In this case the reversal is even more diabolical because Lavinia is already betrothed to Bassianus. It is difficult to believe that within the context of the play Saturninus did not know of the planned wedding between his brother and Lavinia. What Saturninus is more aware of than even the betrothal is the fact that Titus will, as a pietic act, yield to the command. It is also within the realm of Titus's thought of Rome's future that Lavinia will be the mother of a new Rome in a new Golden Age. The ironies, as do the analogies, multiply. In this scene, the complexities of the plot, especially regarding the expression of personalities of the characters, provide a storehouse of opportunities for histrionics of a high order.

Time will reveal how pathetic a figure Saturninus really is. In fact, Shakespeare will practically write him
out of the play by the end of the first act. True, the new emperor is wily; but the strength of his malevolence is no match for the strength of Titus's virtue. Saturninus is not really the villain of the piece. He will serve as nothing more than an instrumental cause for more diabolical and un-Roman forces. The difference between Titus and Saturninus is easily seen by comparing their speeches following Saturninus's offer to marry Lavinia. Titus speaks first:

It doth, my worthy lord; and in this match
I hold me highly honored of your grace,
And here, in sight of Rome, to Saturnine,
King and commander of our commonweal,
The wide world's emperor, do I consecrate
My sword, my chariot, and my prisoners,
Presents well worthy Rome's imperious lord.
Receive them then, the tribute that I owe,
Mine honor's ensigns humbled at thy feet.

(250-258)

Titus is to suffer greatly in trying to fulfill his pledge. He has contracted an obligation that will eventually drive him to the edge of madness. On the other hand, Saturninus glibly proposes a counter pledge to Titus and the people of Rome which he will break with no compunction.

Thanks, noble Titus, father of my life!
How proud I am of thee and of thy gifts
Rome shall record; and when I do forget
The least of these unspeakable deserts,
Romans forget your fealty to me.

(259-263)

Consciously or not, Shakespeare has blended myth with reality by having Saturninus publicly acknowledge Titus as his father. Further, he has given his future opponents an imperial command to destroy him if necessary.

Lest the importance of the scene be overlooked,
several other items should be mentioned. The language and the tone of the two speeches quoted above intimate an almost haphazard commingling of social, political, and philosophical structures. Imperial Rome speaks to the Republic while the social graces of feudalism vibrate within the framework of the commonwealth. From that emerges a synthetic body-politic. Is Shakespeare speaking of Rome or England? Regardless of his thrust, the exchange between Titus and Saturninus throws pietas into relief against the complete synthesis. Pietas remains constant. It is the lesson of the moment, and theatrically the scene can only be completed by the ritual and emblematic staging of Titus prostrating himself at Saturninus's feet. Rome is whole again. Here is no revenge, only political fulfillment.

Before Saturninus has an opportunity to do anything beyond the acknowledgement of obeisance, Titus fortifies his promise of fealty by turning Tamora and her court over to the new Emperor. Ironically, Saturninus had asked Titus for Lavinia's hand in marriage: he receives Tamora's hand in slavery. The handing over of prisoners of war has often been glorified in literature and the visual arts. The procession of prisoners of war being handed over to the reigning monarch is another of the great rituals. In the present situation it is obviously intended to illustrate Titus's loyalty and Saturninus's lack of kingly virtue. Shakespeare's sense of the absurdity of life, war, and politics shows through. Titus has been to the wars. He has suffered the hardships of the
battlefield. He has returned to Rome to present the prizes of victory to one who has been safely enjoying the luxuries of the Empire.

This is Saturninus's finest moment in the play. He is Emperor; he now maneuvers the whole world and begins to play the Machiavellian game of divide and conquer in the glorious rhetorical fashion of the well-turned courtier. He turns to the audience and whispers of Tamora:

A goodly, lady, trust me, of the hue
That I would choose, were I to choose anew.

(268-269)

Then he addresses Tamora as a fair Queen and comforts her, promising that he will make her great in Rome. In the next breath he asks Lavinia for approval to treat Tamora in that manner. The stage directions that are implicit in this speech and the tones of duplicity that rise from the words makes the staging a delight for actor and director. The actor must walk the thin line between tragedy and melodrama to avoid the stereotype of the arch-villain. Lavinia must make an almost definitive statement of character when she responds:

Not I, my lord, sith true nobility
Warrants these words in princely courtesy.

(279-280)

If Saturninus has asked her approval, it would seem to indicate that Lavinia has showed some sign of disapproval. To give Saturninus any more subtle motivation would be to grant him too much wit. The dialogue is important in that it puts words of humility and piety in Lavinia's mouth. She speaks but twice in the entire act even though she will become one of the
instrumental factors in returning Rome to chaos. Her first speech to Titus was honest. She has established credibility. Only if her remark to Saturninus is meant cynically can her later actions be explained. Shakespeare's language is that of the courtly romance. The words make sense in Lavinia's mouth only if she is here interpreted as a liberated and literary lady at the court of Eleanor of Aquitaine. The case will be discussed in Chapter III.

Saturninus brushes aside Lavinia's response and, not to be outdone by Titus, sets free without ransom Tamora and the rest of the Goths. There is not even required a pledge of fealty or oath of loyalty to himself or Rome. In his first official act as Emperor, Saturninus has unleashed tigers in the streets of Rome. He will soon be ensnared by a Machiavellian even more clever and shrewd than himself. Shakespeare makes it easy for the audience to dismiss Saturninus as a worthy foe for Titus; in fact, he almost turns Saturninus into a clown:

Flourish. Saturninus courts Tamora in dumb show.

Bassianus distracts the Andronici from the courtly high jinks with his claim that Lavinia has already been promised to him. By addressing Titus, Bassianus implicitly indicates that Titus is still the source of justice in Rome. The point is well-made. As brother to the Emperor, Bassianus's action must have been difficult. It was a long time coming, but it could not have been better for Saturninus. It has the potential to put Bassianus and the Andronici at a political disadvantage in Rome. If the Andronici refuse Saturninus, they have insulted
the Emperor. If they refuse Bassianus, they have insulted the Emperor's family. On the other hand, Bassianus has dared to contradict an obvious command from the Emperor. The crisis is further compounded by the Roman law that supports Bassianus's claim. Marcus, as a worthy Tribune, reminds Titus that Bassianus seized in justice what was his own according to the law "sum cuique" (to each his own). Titus calls for the Emperor's guard and cries of treason. Saturninus expresses surprise—a reaction that would seem to indicate that he and his guards were still involved in the dumb show. Theatrically, such an interpretation would underline the fact that Saturnalian celebrations had already begun.

Until this point the tests of Titus's piety have been relatively simple. The conflicting obligations have been easily resolved. The circumstances now are more complex and immeasurably more subtle. He is a soldier, not a politician. He has the rigid mentality of a military man. His logic is tempered by the military considerations of supply and retention of position. He is accustomed to move from a position of strength commanding the world's greatest army. He has relinquished that position to Saturninus. He has to face Emperor and family and the people of Rome to make the decision. His decisions have always involved friend and foe apart. Now he must decide from among the state, the Emperor, and the home. Before he can do more than call for the Emperor, the action escapes his control. The stage becomes chaotic:

_Exeunt Bassianus and Marcus with Lavinia._
Titus first loses control of his brother and his daughter.

**Exeunt Lucius, Quintus, and Martius.**

Then he loses control of his three sons who hurry to help Lavinia and Bassianus escape.

**He kills him.**

Finally, Titus is compelled to kill his own son Mutius who has barred the way.

**During the fray, Saturninus, Tamora, Demetrius, Chiron, and Aaron go out, and re-enter above.**

Apparently Titus's command to Saturninus to "follow" (line 300) meant not to follow the escaping couple but rather to exit and not be concerned with the family matter. It is Titus, unable to relinquish his hold, who intends to resolve the problem. For Saturninus, this is fortuitous. Whatever happens will be to his interest **without his involvement.** His strongest opposition is in the process of destroying itself, and Tamora is quite available as a substitute for Lavinia.

**Enter Lucius.**

Lavinia and Bassianus have apparently escaped. It is fitting that Lucius should return to the scene. His words to Titus upon seeing the body of Mutius would sting the very soul of any person other than Titus:

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My lord, you are unjust; and more than so,
In wrongful quarrel you have slain your son.
(305-306)
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Lucius informs the unlistening Titus that he has ignored justice, flouted it, even killed it in the person of Mutius,
who had died to protect Roman law. The catalogue of horrors that spring from acts of pietas grows. It appears that Titus's idea of justice can work only in the abstract, and not even Lucius can move Titus to a more rational attitude. Rather, he forces Titus to turn inward and reject his whole world. The importance of this sequence between Titus and Lucius is that it shows Lucius as the one who more clearly understands the need for justice, the value of pietic action in preserving justice, and the importance of rationality in action. In Titus, the playwright shows arrogance, pride, and blindness. The pathetic quality of Titus at this point is that his error is not willful. He simply does not understand. His is the problem of unmitigated moral idealism.

The logic of pietas comes under scrutiny in this exchange also; for when Titus demands the return of Lavinia to the Emperor, Lucius promises his dead body out of respect for the law and individual rights. Pietas is a sword that cuts with both edges, and Lucius thus proves his own pietic worthiness. The confrontation between the old Titus and the young Lucius smooths the way for Lucius's eventual assumption of the role of Emperor.

Exit Lucius.

For a brief moment Titus is left alone except for the body of the dead Mutius. It is the first time in the play that the stage is so deserted and is symbolic of the future greater loneliness for Titus. He stands alone with the body of a son killed by his own hand, seized by unmitigated suffering.
Even Jupiter, symbolically present in the person of Lucius has deserted Titus because he has offended the basis of his strength, his family. He does not think any longer; he simply acts. His virtue is no longer a moral act, but simply an instinctive reaction to circumstance. Some theologians call this natural or amoral virtue, which, when left uncontrolled, can lead to obsession and even madness.

Saturninus's re-entry (as indicated in the stage direction cited on page 103) should be staged to coincide with Lucius's exit; however, dramatic pause would be effective before Saturninus speaks. Such a staging would allow Titus an opportunity to do a dumb show over the body of Mutius and permit the audience to see the new alignment of power between Saturninus and the Goths. The stage picture is worth mentioning:

Saturninus and the Goths luxuriating aloft as Titus kneels in anguish in the streets of Rome. The situation has worked perfectly to Saturninus's advantage. His speech to Titus confirms an earlier judgment that he acted with a lack of sincerity. Saturninus suddenly finds himself no longer in need of Lavinia or any of the Andronici, including Titus. He abrogates his vow to Titus:

I'll trust by leisure him that mocks me once; Thee never, nor thy traitorous haughty sons, Confederates all thus to dishonor me. Was none in Rome to make a stale But Saturninus? Full well, Andronicus, Agree these deeds with that proud brag of thine That saidst I beg the empire at thy hands. (314-320)

The accusation that the Andronici have betrayed him marks
Saturninus as akin to the unscrupulous Renaissance prince who will stop at nothing to secure power. His own greatest mistake is that he is so obvious. None of the cunning and subtle political mentality are at work in him. Saturninus's Machiavellian virtu is as blunt as Titus's pietas is sharp.

A difficulty raised by Saturninus's speech is that Titus has not boasted about his granting Saturninus the crown. Joseph Kramer has commented on the difficulty. He has indicated that even though Titus has made no such boast, his eminent virtue and his very popularity with the people are the causes of great jealousy on Saturninus's part. He says:

... Indeed, Titus has made no such boast, but that is to interpret "bragge" in the very narrow sense. An obsolete meaning for brag, current prior to 1632 in the substantive usage, is "show; pompous demeanor" (OED). To paraphrase, Saturninus is saying, "These deeds agree full well with that proud behavior of your earlier, that show for the multitude, which signified I was a beggar to you for the Empire." "Saidst" in this case is used in the broadest sense of "signified" or "expressed." This is not, then, a lapse due to rapid revision; rather, these lines begin, quite clearly, the theme of Saturninus's ingratitude and his resentment of Titus's popularity with the people.22

Kramer's explanation gives the accusation a certain validity from the viewpoint of a scholar of the language, but it does not help make the line play any better on the stage. It makes better sense to think that Saturninus is dissembling and hoping to get away with it. As a matter of fact, he does.

Saturninus's accusation that Titus really lacks piety actually succeeds because of the truth of the contrary. It is piety that prevents Titus from responding in the agony of misunderstood virtue. He cannot fight back. The hurt is too much, especially coming upon the loss of his family. He does not understand; for, as far as he knows, he has followed all the rules. If he has committed some error, he does not recognize it. It is a classic case of a falsely accused Christ who stands dumb before Pilate when asked the unanswerable question: what is truth?

This kind of dumb show can only mean guilt in the eyes of Rome. Titus can easily appeal to the law; he can appeal to the courts. At this time, he can still appeal to the people. Time has not yet intervened to make them forget their gratitude for his many accomplishments in the name of Rome. Unfortunately, there is no one present to defend him. With nothing in the way, Saturninus continues the attack by dismissing Lavinia as a "changeling piece" (line 323) and by disowning Bassianus as "lawless" (line 326). Saturninus has figuratively disemboweled Titus who lies prostrate at his feet, politically impotent. In the classic myth Cronus emasculated Uranus with a jagged sickle. In Titus, Saturninus is far more professional. Let Titus tell how:

These words are razors to my wounded heart. (line 328)

The symbolic castration is almost complete. Saturn rules Rome. Titus's family, at this point, has no hopes of fathering
or mothering a new Roman race.

In the new dispensation, Saturninus takes Tamora, until recently the arch-enemy of Rome, as his wife and Empress. Rome is about to become a matriarchy. Saturninus compares Tamora to the goddess Diana, the stately Phoebe, and in so doing replaces the household gods of Rome with the goddess of darkness and the hunt. In a twinkling the bright light of the Golden Age has been turned into the darkness of the moon. The wilderness of tigers is almost a reality. Because of Titus's piety, the tigress Tamora still lives; and because of Saturninus's unbridled lust, Tamora rules Rome. Both forces, unallayed by reason or moderation, have established the causes of their own tragic ends.

Tamora's acceptance of the offer of marriage and a share in the Empire has a curious ring to it. She swears her allegiance to Rome "if Saturninus advance the Queen of the Goths" (line 344). From what follows it appears that Saturninus has not heard Tamora since his speech makes no notice of her conditional acceptance. The condition might be interpreted as a stage direction in which Tamora speaks the line as an aside or it may even indicate a special cue for Saturninus's behavior in his brief hour of glory. It is also possible that he was too distracted by the celebration of his followers to have heard the very cynical acceptance of his marriage proposal. He obviously hears her final line:

She will be a handmaid to his desires,
A loving nurse, a mother to his youth.

(345-346)
She assumes to herself all the attributes of the Earth Mother and clarifies a major difference in the personalities of the Emperor and Empress. To this point, Saturninus has displayed almost the entire catalogue of political vice. Tamora has revealed very little of her real self. The potential for metamorphosis is clearly seen in Tamora. Saturninus, on the other hand, has practically achieved a fullness of character. Tamora will shrewdly wait until the marriage vows are consecrated by priest and holy water before revealing any more of her true self.

An even more curious element, however, has been introduced in Saturninus's proposal to Tamora:

And here I swear by the Roman gods,
Sith priest and holy water are so near,
And tapers burn so bright, and everything
In readiness for Hymenaeus stand,

(336-339)

The allusion to priests, holy water, and candles is typically Shakespearean in that it is topical, historical, political mythological, and anachronistic all at the same time. There is no way of knowing what the playwright's intent was in this instance, but the various allusions are worthy of analytical comment. The reference to priests, holy water, and candles is one of those remarkable examples of ambiguous fence straddling. Shakespeare's audience was entirely aware of the contemporary problem related to papist practices. There had been a concentrated effort since the death of Henry VIII, especially under Edward VI, to eliminate many of the symbols
of the Church of Rome.\textsuperscript{23} In fact, there was still prevalent in England, especially outside Puritan London, great resistance to the Book of Common Prayer (promulgated in 1549) in which the sacramental value of the priesthood was denied and the use of candles, holy water, and blessed ashes forbidden.\textsuperscript{24} Thus such an allusion in the play would have created a less than sympathetic picture of Saturninus and Tamora in the eyes of Puritan sympathizers. On the other hand, Elizabeth, fully aware of the strong pro-Roman sentiment among the upper classes and nobles scarcely prosecuted those practicing Roman rituals. Shakespeare seems to have played both sides against each other and to have protected himself from either by his allusion to the classical and mythological tradition. The feast of the winter solstice honoring the god Saturn was marked by the carrying of lighted tapers and candles. Ironically, it was a feast of lights.

The above analysis may appear strained on the surface, but Tamora's promise to Saturninus seems to fortify the thesis. She has drawn an image of herself as a handmaiden to his desires and a mother to his youth. The analogy to Mary of Judah, mother of the Christ, is unmistakeable; and it creates a picture of virginal humility and maternal sacrifice. Furthermore, the entire allusion finds its structural partner

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later in the play in an argument over papist ideas between Lucius and Aaron. Curiously, *romanitas* was not the easiest philosophical path to follow for the English playwright. Nevertheless, it is historically certain that the anti-Roman movement ultimately collapsed in the British commonwealth.  

In the exchange between Saturninus and Tamora, Shakespeare gives both antagonists an opportunity to state their cases apart from the basic problem of the play. In his presentation Shakespeare paints a cruelly accurate picture of vice personified in the guise of royalty, a dangerous posture for a young playwright to take. Perhaps he was aware of the political security afforded him by cosmopolitan London. Nevertheless, by bringing Roman and Gothic cultures together in this manner, Shakespeare prepares the audience for not just a consummation of marriage but also the Emperor's own emasculation. The merger is destined to bring Rome to her knees before the almost-mad *pietas* of Titus and the rational *pietas* of Lucius together re-establish order. Shakespeare again blends mythology, history, literature, and theatre in the next moment. Saturninus dares to approach the gods:

> Ascend, fair Queen, Pantheon, Lords, accompany Your noble Emperor and his lovely bride, Sent by the Heaven for Prince Saturnine, Whose wisdom hath her fortune conquered. There shall we consummate our spousal rites. (347-351)

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Both Saturninus and Tamora have quickly forgotten their admonitions to Titus. Tamora had earlier accused him of drawing near to the gods in his piety, an accusation of pride. Saturninus had accused Titus of arrogance and deceit in his display of patriotism. Together they ascend the Pantheon (the sacred shrine of the gods) in their own defiant act of arrogance. Saturninus and Tamora have taken upon themselves the euhemeristic role of history. They wilfully dare to mythologize themselves. The scene is important because it throws into relief the forces opposing pietas. In presenting so colorful a picture of all that is not Roman and pietic in a ritual act of pride, the playwright clearly defines the issues in the play. In doing so, Shakespeare has prepared the way for the major battles to follow.

_Exeunt all but Titus._

Furthermore, pietas has not been invited to the wedding.

Alone on the stage, Titus resorts to speaking to himself. There is no artificiality of rhetoric; the poetry is sparse. Neither a monologue nor a soliloquy, the speech is the sigh of a soul in pain:

I am not bid to wait upon the bride.
Titus, when wert thou wont to walk alone,
Dishonored thus and challenged of wrongs?
(353-355)

This short lament that bares the private soul of a man leaves no doubt: Titus is a human being capable of feeling. In retrospect, his pietic acts already seem honorable compared to the selfish and arrogant acts of the new Emperor and Tamora.
At least, his actions had a noble intention outside his own well-being. Titus's speech serves several important dramatic purposes. As a private moment not intended for anyone's eyes or ears, it gives the audience an opportunity to see Titus as a suffering old man worthy of pity. Its brevity also fore­shadows and prepares for the greatly exaggerated emotional scenes to come. It prepares the audience for the future view of a man broken by the events he himself has set in motion.

Then with a brilliant stroke of writing Shakespeare literally stops the major action of the play by adding one more detail to Titus's character. Despite all his losses and with the body of his son lying nearby, Titus bemoans the fact that he has not been invited to the wedding. He cannot understand the Emperor's lack of courtesy, his lack of social piety. The bathos can only be intentional.

Enter Marcus and Titus' sons, Lucius, Quintus and Martius.

The death of Mutius can hardly be a shock to Marcus; he returns with Lucius who has undoubtedly already told him of the horrible deed. Perhaps Marcus should not even notice the body but simply enter making his angry charge against Titus:

O Titus, see, oh, see what thou hast done!
In a bad quarrel slain a virtuous son.

(356-357)

The rhyming couplet filled with indignant expletives and the sentiments of a schoolboy's chapbook has special meaning. It is an example of the sententia, a kind of moral or maxim, used to identify the purpose of a scene on the Rederyker stage.
The literary or poetic quality of the sententia was never a measure of its worth; but as a rhetorical device, it might introduce a debate or be the pithy summation of a sermon. On the Rederyker stage of the Chambers of Rhetoric such a convention was an integral part of the production.

Not only were banderoles carried by actors and revealed to indicate bits of dialogue, they were placed before or around characters, to supply names, mottoes, speeches.26

One of its important effects is the removal of a sense of theatrical identity with what is occurring on the stage. In doing so it lessens the impact of the reality of anguish, pain, even horror of the moment. On the contrary it allows the metaphysical and ethical aspects of the pain or horror to be examined in a cool and detached manner. Drama becomes philosophy, and the theatre becomes the courtroom. Shakespeare uses this device repeatedly throughout the play, especially in moments of great intensity and horror. Frequently Marcus is called upon to be the instrument of this convention.

Titus does not even give Marcus an opportunity to develop his thesis. His response is that of a person who has lost his argument. He can only shriek negatives:

No, foolish Tribune, no! No son of mine, Nor thou, nor these, confederates in the deed That hath dishonored all our family: Unworthy brother and unworthy sons! (358-361)

In these four marvelous lines Titus uses eight patterned

26 Kernodle, From Art to Theatre, p. 124.
negatives: three no's, two nor's, and two un's. The point
is minor but the playwright successfully establishes that
there can be no real debate, no actual discussion of the
morality of Titus's deed. Titus has locked himself into a
categorical position. He cannot accept any idea other than
that his family has dishonored him and Rome. He stands alone.
Virtue is its own reward.

For a moment the play stops. There is no conflict
because the protagonist has withdrawn from the battle.
Shrewdly, Shakespeare turns to a motif that earlier set the
stage in motion: a burial scene. The play becomes almost
primordial in its necrophilism. Shakespeare is to return to
this ritual act again and again until Rome becomes the
archetypal necropolis. Shakespeare's understanding of the
Roman mind is never more clear. Like other great civilizations,
Rome built itself an empire of monumental circuses and cemeter-
ies. Fittingly, Lucius (who, more and more becomes an alter-
Titus) requests a fitting burial for his brother. Titus's
refusal separates his brand of piety from that of Lucius. The
case for Lucius's eventual transformation into Emperor is
reinforced again. As always, Lucius stands in the middle of
virtue.

Titus's response is not totally without merit:

Traitors, away! He rests not in this tomb.
This monument five hundred years hath stood,
Which I have sumptuously re-edified.
(364-366)

Burial of Mutius in the Andronici tomb would somehow, in the
mind of Titus, defile the antique glory of the place. Titus reaches into the mythic past for justification for his position. It is an appeal to *romanitas*. His implication is that he alone has maintained the family tradition by the re-edification. The nuances of the meanings in the word *edify* extend Titus's speech beyond the simple act of rebuilding. He is also the moral and spiritual saviour of the family. Again Titus must be found guilty of the sin of pride. He saves himself, however, from total and unrelieved arrogance. Titus finally approves burial in some other place.

In hearkening back to the law for which the boy has died, Marcus accuses Titus of impiety. The Tribune insists on Mutius's burial with his brothers. At one and the same time, the other brothers leap to the side of Marcus. Titus's scream impels Martius to call off his brothers:

He is not with himself; let us withdraw (line 384)

*The brother and the sons kneel.*

The scene changes immediately and completely from antagonism to compromise. The delicacy and beauty of the sequence can only be recaptured in the poetry:

Mar. Brother, for in that name doth Nature plead--
Quin. Father, and in that name doth Nature speak--
Titus Speak thou no more, if all the rest will speed.
Mar. Renowned Titus, more than half my soul--
Luc. Dear father, soul and substance of us all--
Mar. Suffer thy brother Marcus to inter
His noble nephew here in virtue's nest,
That died in honor and Lavinia's cause.
Thou art a Roman: be not barbarous.
The Greeks upon advise did bury Ajax
That slew himself; and wise Laertes' son
Did graciously plead for his funerals.
Let not young Mutius, then, that was thy joy, 
Be barred his entrance here.

Titus Rise, Marcus, rise. 
They rise.

The dismal'st day is this that e'er I saw, 
To be dishonored by my sons in Rome! 
Well, bury him, and bury me the next.

They put him in the tomb.

Luc. There lie thy bones, sweet Mutius, with thy friend 
Till we with trophies do adorn thy tomb.

All. Kneeling. No man shed tears for noble Mutius: 
He lives in fame that died in virtue's cause. 

(387-410)

Shakespeare has combined poetry, drama, ritual and mythology into a quintessential statement of the entire play. Pietas lives, for the time being, in a consortium. Dramatically and structurally this sequence is of extreme importance. Immediately preceding this realignment of the Andronici, Saturninus and Tamora had solidified an evil construct in Rome. Now the Andronici reconciliation promises new hope for Rome. Moreover, the piety of Titus and his sons more than compensates for the lasciviousness of the court. The plot has been reversed again.

An analysis of the pleas in the sequences under discussion establishes the validity of the aforementioned conclusions. The language used is unquestionably within the scope of the pietic thrust of the play. Titus is addressed as father, brother, soul, and substance of them all. He is addressed not so much as a person but as the natural embodiment of piety. The family has finally found an avenue to the heart and soul of Titus. They have enshrined him in the same manner that Lady Rhetoric and other virtues were enshrined above the proceedings of the Rederyker stage. In addition, the
enshrinement of Titus structurally parallels the self-enshrinement of evil by Saturninlus and Tamora. Lucius has extended Titus from the matter and form of Rome into the life-giving force itself. Unable to forget the argument with which he came to the scene originally, Marcus then recites in the manner of the law court precedents for burying Mutius. Shakespeare carefully chose instances from the Trojan War and the Aeneid. Myth is tied to history and a ritual act of supplication results in the supreme ritual of burial.

Titus also has several lines of special interest here. As the pleas tumble out from the suppliants interrupting each other in their fear of being rejected, Titus asks that they do it quickly. They apparently do not hear, for they continue to plead. Finally, when he does impress upon them his acquiescence, he adds the charge that they bury him next. The two lines taken together seem to indicate a premonition of things to come. Titus could have refused and allowed the Andronici family to fragment and wither. But Rome needs his help and he cannot do it alone. To interpret his hesitancy to a mixture of piety and a fear of a tragic end gives Titus greater stature as a man and as a symbol of good.

Dramatic technique, so effective in the above-mentioned sequence, suffers by comparison in the next exchange. The action must be turned again to the political crisis in Rome. It is especially fitting that Marcus has the responsibility of making the awkward transition from the quiet ritual of the burial to a consideration of Tamora as the new Empress.
The next few lines are among the most difficult to understand in the entire play. The possibilities for variant interpretations can lead critics down widely divergent paths. To Marcus's question concerning Tamora's sudden rise to power, Titus responds:

I know not, Marcus; but I know it is,
Whether by device or no, the Heavens can tell.

(414-415)

The weight of doubt, confusion, and hurt echo in these words. The sound is that of a man saddened by the ironies of history. His next words contain a recognition of the tragic ironies that will haunt the play to its final lines:

Is she then not beholding to the man
That brought her for this high turn so far?
Yes, and will nobly him remunerate.

(416-418)

The ambiguity contained within this speech recalls a similar ambiguity when Saturninus earlier told Tamora that he (meaning either Saturninus or Titus) could make her greater than the Queen of Goths. The syntax allows for dual interpretation in both speeches. In Titus's speech, the implication that she will remunerate her champion (Titus or Saturninus) must not be lost. Dramatically, Titus sets the stage for the potential and forthcoming downfall of both himself and the Emperor.

Flourish. Enter the Emperor Saturninus, Tamora, and her two sons, Demetrius, and Chiron, with the Moor Aaron at one door. Enter at the other door Bassianus and Lavinia, with others.

The final scene in the first act opens as do the other important scenes with a formal entrance. This time,
the entrance signifies a wedding procession, rather, two processions. The Roman mentality appreciated the symbolism of unity signified by a wedding. Shakespeare merely intensifies the irony of the weddings by having two at a time. At the recessional of this scene, the participants will make their way to a wedding feast. What occurs between the two large movements of people on and off the stage can rightly be termed a masque. The entire cast of characters plays a deadly charade in an attempt to discover each other's weaknesses; and under the guise of courtliness, the opposing forces prepare for battle. Symbolically, at the end of the scene, they go to feed themselves in preparation for the death struggle. Thus the ritual of eating has become inextricably bound to the ritual of burial in a grisly metaphor.

Saturninus's opening jibe at Bassianus belies the hatred that motivates it. Saturninus does not regret losing Lavinia since he has his own prize; however, true to the nature of the Machiavellian prince, he despises having lost the battle. His wish for joy to Bassianus rings with spite and insincerity. With great difficulty Bassianus controls himself and responds in pietic terms:

And you yours, my lord! I say no more,
Nor wish no less; and so I take my leave.
(419-420)

Insulted and unable to play the role of Emperor with subtlety and understatement, Saturninus confronts Bassianus with the accusation of the crime of treason, specifically rape, a most horrid crime in Rome. The font of the family, the state,
and the cosmos is violated in rape. Saturninus plays his strongest suit in a frontal attack.

A similar attack earlier had taken Titus by surprise. Then there had been no response. This time Saturninus is not to be so fortunate. Bassianus, pietic though he be, is not a Titus; moreover, it is his brother who accuses him. He counters with the logic and wit noticeably missing in the Emperor's own style. Bassianus throws himself upon the mercy and justice of the law since he has taken what is legally his:

Rape, call you it, my lord, to seize my own,
My true-betrothed love, and now my wife?
But let the laws of Rome determine all:
Meanwhile I am possessed of that is mine.

(425-428)

He has won the second round with his brother. Saturninus can simply mutter what proves to be a death sentence for his younger brother:

'Tis good, sir. You are very short with us;
But if we live, we'll be as sharp with you.

(429-430)

The threat is veiled but Saturninus is still too young in power to act unilaterally. He has yet to win the hearts of the Roman people away from Titus.

Bassianus then delivers his only important speech in the play. He makes a final gesture to reconcile the dissident factions; and for the last time the voice of reason speaks out for dignity, zeal, patriotism, and piety. Never does Bassianus imply the possibility that revenge has a role in this crisis. Rome stands on the brink of destruction because of conflicting principles of political justice. Bassianus knows that the
answer can be found only in the return of the Andronici family to royal favor. The sincerity and righteousness of his cause is strengthened by the preface to his noble intentions:

My lord, what I have done, as best I may, Answer I must, and shall do with my life. (431-432)

The love of justice and the sense of property expressed in his speech heighten even more the tragic loss to Rome by his early death. The sentiment charges the souls of all of Shakespeare's political heroes. Here, as later, Shakespeare sacrifices nobility for the purposes of tragedy.

Before Saturninus can answer Bassianus, Titus usurps the position of authority by rejecting Bassianus and his plea for justice. Titus insists that he needs no mediator, especially one who has dishonored him and his family. He insists that he needs only Rome herself and the gods to testify to his love and honor for Saturninus. Again Saturninus does not speak. Tamora usurps his place in the order of things. The plot reverses itself again, for suddenly Saturnius is really no longer the Emperor of Rome. He has been consumed in his own lust for Tamora. What should have been the symbol (his marriage) for a new order in Rome, has created new chaos. The playwright amplifies the irony even more, for the two marriages will bring chaos to the organism of Rome. Again Shakespeare has captured the essence of the Roman way, for marriage was considered as the necessary conditio sine qua non of the integrated political structure. The metamorphosis of Saturninus is complete; he is reduced to a petulant and
impotent ruler who snivels at Tamora's elbow:

\[
\text{What, madam! be dishonored openly,}
\text{And basely put it up without revenge?} \\
(452-453)
\]

From this moment on, Saturninus recedes into the background of the play: he has served his purpose well as the instrument for bringing Tamora, the true antagonist, to the stage front. It is a cruel dramaturgical trick that has been played on the character by Shakespeare but the shift to Tamora is necessary for several reasons. Already Saturninus has proven his inappropriateness as an opponent for Titus. Had he remained, the play would have been simply a story of a power struggle already resolved. Although some critics find such a shift a mark of inconsistency, they should perhaps consider that one of the dominant motifs in the play is the shifting of antagonistic forces caused by metamorphoses. The device cannot be faulted; it is a valid and workable one.

Proponents of the revenge theory have pointed to Saturninus's threat of revenge as a supportive argument for their thesis. Two things militate against such a conclusion. The first, Saturninus's removal from power, has already been discussed. The second is simpler. Even if Saturninus were in power, he would have no reason. His threat of revenge is as empty as his charge of rape.

Next follows one of the longest speeches in the play. Appropriately, it belongs to Tamora. The playwright must give the character an opportunity to establish herself as an important agent in the play. Until this time she has been a
passive audience quietly allowing herself to be manipulated into the position of Empress and antagonist. The unobtrusive manner in which she is integrated into the main flow of the plot is a model of dramaturgical skill. The remainder of the scene belongs to her except for one small pietic act on the part of Titus.

Tamora now assumes the role of mediator when she offers to speak disinterestedly for all the parties. Her presumption of indifference is so bald that no one raises an objection except Saturninus, and it is not to the point:

My worthy lord, if ever Tamora
Were gracious in those princely eyes of thine,
Then hear me speak indifferently for all;
And at thy suit, sweet, pardon what is past.

(448-451)

Unctious piety flows like honey to trap the unwitting Saturninus. Tamora gives her first lesson in Machiavellian deception. She dissembles; despite the use of womanly language, her calling the Emperor "sweet," she speaks as a cold and detached queen:

... on mine honor dare I undertake
For good Lord Titus' innocence in all;
Whose fury not dissembled speaks his griefs.
Then at my suit, look graciously on him;
Lose not so noble a friend on vain suppose,
Nor with sour looks afflict his gentle heart.

(456-461)

Tamora instinctively understands where the power base in Rome resides—in the person of Titus. In a stunning move, she throws the blame of the problem onto Saturninus himself. It is a master stroke politically. The delay in finding a suitable opponent for Titus has been worth the while. Tamora injects new life into a play that has moved in a curious circle
of ritual and pageantry until this point.

Then Saturninus makes a move to remonstrate. In an instant, Tamora pulls him aside and vows rich rewards in his ear:

My lord, be ruled by me, be won at last; Dissemble all your griefs and discontents. You are but newly planted in your throne; Lest then the people, and the patricians too, Upon a just survey take Titus' part, And so supplant you for ingratitude, Which Rome reputes to be a heinous sin, Yield at entreats, and then let me alone. (463-469)

The speech might easily be a page torn from a manuscript of Machiavelli's *Prince*. Once and for all, she establishes her primacy in Rome. She rules a wilderness of tigers. Tamora cannot be accused of not understanding the role of piety either. She clearly knows that ingratitude (the epitome of impiety) is the most heinous crime in Rome. Her allusions to the Roman gods and her understanding of Roman law reveal a calculating political strategist.

Then she introduces the important element of revenge as a means of destroying a person because of his religious act of piety. *Titus Andronicus* is no longer a play just about Rome; it is a play about the world. Tamora has elevated the play to a cosmic conflict:

I'll find a day to massacre them all, And raze their faction and their family. The cruel father and his traitorous sons, To whom I sued for my dear son's life; And make them know what 'tis to let a queen Kneel in the streets and beg for grace in vain.-- (471-476)

Her final lines make her threat almost noble and Tamora takes
her place in the tragedy of Titus Andronicus.

The speech is filled with hyperbole, lytotes, and paradox. All the tricks of rhetoric and theatre are used to full advantage here. She cajoles, lies, insinuates, charms, and pleads her case. She aligns herself with the gods of Rome and her Roman brethren:

Titus, I am incorporate in Rome,
A Roman now adopted happily,
And must advise the Emperor for his good.

(483-485)

Later she will out-herod Herod; now she out-Titus's Titus. Irony abounds: the very thing that has elevated her to power in Rome (the pietas of Titus in his choice of Saturninus) is that which she vows to destroy; and she promises that destruction under the guise of pietic advice to the Emperor.

The transformation of Rome into a battleground for the gods is complete. Tamora and Titus both have the gods on their sides. Each has a mission. Diabolically, Tamora will fight on two levels: Gothic revenge and Roman piety. She begins by raising Titus to his feet and resolving all disagreements in a few words. She speaks with the divine right of kings; her word is law. She will be Saturninus's advisor. The quarrel between Titus and Saturninus is immediately terminated. Tamora unilaterally promises that Bassianus will be mild and the rest must humble themselves on their knees. All must ask pardon from the Emperor. Tamora has achieved her moment of glory with all of Rome at her feet. Shakespeare has constructed a striking antithesis to the opening of the play. The roles
of victor and vanquished have been reversed, and pietas has been momentarily perverted.

In his act of obeisance, Lucius provides a glimmer of hope. He refuses to capitulate completely. He insists that his actions taken in behalf of Lavinia were justified. Marcus choruses his agreement. When Saturninus attempts to dismiss them as traitors, Tamora again reinforces her position in Rome. She advises Saturninus:

Nay, nay, sweet Emperor, we must all be friends. The tribune and his nephews kneel for grace: I will not be denied. Sweetheart, look back. (501-504)

Saturninus has one last chance to redeem himself but he handles the situation very badly. There is no dignity, no nobility, and no finesse. Saturninus begins an elaborate speech of forgiveness; then almost as if bored by the affairs of state, he says simply to the suppliants: "Stand up" (line 508). For one who has insisted upon ceremony, he perfunctorily forgives the Andronici their faults. He appears to be in a hurry to get married and go to the wedding feast. Affairs of state recede quickly into the background for the new Emperor. It is as if nothing unpleasant has ever happened, and Titus proposes a solemn hunt on the morrow as a wedding gift. Suddenly the atmosphere has become almost too courtly. Titus wishes the Emperor "bonjour," and the Emperor bestows "gramercy too" upon Titus. The players have spoken their lines and the masque recesses to dinner.

Exeunt. Sound trumpets.
CHAPTER III

WILDERNESS OF TIGERS

The Antithesis of Pietas Expressed in Act II through Allegorical Language and Staging

Act II of Titus Andronicus represents an approach to pietas in an antithetical fashion by featuring prominently the persons and actions that are diametrically opposed to Titus and to acts of piety. Evil, both real and symbolic, takes the stage. Aided by Tamora and her sons in acts of evil violence, Aaron replaces Titus and his family, whose acts of piety highlighted Act I. Along with the shift from good to bad characters, the relatively well-disciplined language of Act I is abandoned for the sake of overblown and exaggerated diction. Moreover, the unities of time and place vanish from the play and the pietic Roman order is exchanged for the chaos of an unregulated forest. In Act II Rome becomes figuratively a wilderness of tigers, and a pattern of thesis-antithesis is formally admitted to the play. For an appreciation of the significance of those changes within the play, a departure must be made from the central thesis of this study in order to consider the poetic and rhetorical traditions in Elizabethan England and the conventions of the tableaux vivants and the Rederyker stages.

Poets of the English Renaissance inherited several
critical legacies from the classical and medieval rhetorical traditions. Throughout the centuries preceding the Renaissance, the truly Aristotelian concept of the rhetorical had either been misunderstood or twisted to fit literary or political needs. The result was that the English Renaissance poets inherited critical theories of classical criticism "as interpreted by the middle ages."^1 In fact, those poets were governed by a terminology of rhetoric not actually designed for their poetic craft. As a result, much of the poetry of the English Renaissance had a mannered quality that might be referred to as rhetorical. This confusion of terminology was accompanied by a confusion of the nature of rhetoric and poetry according to the classical definitions.2

Aristotle defined rhetoric as "the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion."3 His purpose for rhetoric, as developed by other classical writers, was extended beyond simply the means of persuasion to the act


2 In this brief summary of the relationship of rhetoric to the poetry of the English Renaissance, the following authorities have been consulted in addition to Clark: J. E. Spingarn (A History of Literary Criticism in the Renaissance); Charles Osborne McDonald (The Rhetoric of Tragedy: Form in Stuart Drama); Lee A. Sonnino (A Handbook to Sixteenth-Century Rhetoric); Sister Miriam Joseph (Shakespeare's Use of the Arts of Language); and Rosemond Tuve (Elizabethan and Metaphysical Imagery). Specific references will be made to individual authors at various points in the analysis of Act II.

3 Aristotle, 1355b 25.
of persuasion itself. Moreover, in the classical world, rhetoric was accepted as one of the important disciplines necessary for the well-educated man. On the other hand, poetry was viewed by classical writers as an imitative discipline whose greatest value was in "the teaching of morality."\(^4\) The two disciplines were further distinguished by the notion that poetry was considered an intuitive knowledge while rhetoric was considered an intellectual knowledge. Thus, while poetry was concerned primarily with plot and character, rhetoric was concerned to a great extent with elocution, the element of style, or the choice and arrangement of words in a sentence. In fact, in the Roman world rhetorical style was a major interest to both Cicero and Quintillian.

Although correctness of expression and artistic arrangement became increasingly important considerations to the Roman rhetorician, the "glory of style lay in its use of figures."\(^5\) Eventually, so much emphasis was placed on the use of figures of speech that rhetorical practices eventually reduced the discipline to formalistic verbal display; and the art of persuasion became distorted from its original purpose.

The stylistic usages of rhetoric soon found their way into poetic works. That is understandable since both disciplines had the common element of diction. By the time of

\(^5\)Ibid., p. 29.
the Renaissance, the two were meshed into one form. That meshing was partially a result of a Roman preoccupation and obsession with style, a style frequently characterized by the words, aureate or florid. A political situation in Rome that denied certain liberties of speech also provided an atmosphere in which style naturally assumed greater proportions than content. Much later, Renaissance poets, including Elizabethan poets and playwrights, found the Roman style an exemplary source of imitation. Romanitas permeated even the literary activities of the Renaissance world. In Renaissance England as in Classical Rome, both poetry and rhetoric suffered from the same bad taste in trying to achieve stylistic brilliance. Often the poets neglected plot and characterization in their dramas for the sake of technical and linguistic showmanship. Shakespeare himself has often been compared to Seneca in this regard and also has been accused of this kind of self-indulgent showmanship, especially in Act II of Titus Andronicus. Actually, the rhetorical-poetic presentation of characters and situations in Titus may very well be one of the commendable factors in the play.

The Elizabethans, of course, did not simply rejuvenate the Roman rhetorical style without any influence from other literary traditions. The middle ages served as a bridge between the perversions of Roman rhetoric and the common practices of the Renaissance. Medieval writers added a factor all their own to poetic theory and practice. They contributed the notion and practice that rhetoric was nothing more than
the use of picturesque allegory for the sake of beauty, charm or color. Honeyed speech was enshrined by the academicians, and the traditional discipline of rhetoric was transferred to poetry as an adjunct activity. Thus poetry in the middle ages exhibited a dual aesthetics: profitable subject matter (doctrina) and the refined style (eloquentia). As a result of this aesthetics, rhetoric was reduced to the position of style alone; and medieval poetry emerged with a peculiarly unique form.

That theory of poetry as the art form dedicated to "delightful instruction" persisted into the Renaissance and became a central argument in Sir Philip Sidney's *Defence of Poesy*. Whether Shakespeare ascribed to that theory or not is of no concern here. The fact is that the manifestation of the theory can be observed in the workings of *Titus Andronicus*, especially in Act II. It is in that context that the poetic and rhetorical figures mentioned herein will be used. If Act II is described as a rhetorical and allegorical presentation of the forces antithetical to pietas, such a description must be understood as an Elizabethan one.

The practical application of the theory of delightful instruction reached its zenith with the activities of the tableaux vivants and the Chambers of Rhetoric in France and in

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the Low Countries from the fourteenth through the sixteenth centuries. The relationship between those theatrical forms and Shakespeare, and in particular Titus, has already been shown in Chapters I and II; however, they should be viewed again in the light of the rhetorical and poetic conventions discussed in the preceding few pages.

Despite the classical connotation of their name, the Chambers of Rhetoric were chiefly responsible for the creation of poetry, music, and plays. Those chambers or societies, which were organized for religious purposes in the fourteenth century, eventually devoted themselves chiefly to the composition of poetry and drama. One of the most popular of their endeavors was the allegorical theme play, a counterpart of the native English morality play. George Kernodle has convincingly conjectured that both the literary and theatrical conventions of the Chambers had an important influence on English theatre, especially that of Elizabethan England. Both the English and continental theatrical forms reflected the critical and popular expectations that poetry and drama had a dual objective: pleasure and ethical profit or moral improvement through allegory.

The Chambers of Rhetoric eventually developed interest in non-religious subject matter such as political, philosophical, or social issues. They even played an important role

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7 Kernodle, From Art to Theatre, chs. 4 and 8.
8 Clark, Rhetoric and Poetry, pp. 114-117.
in the discussion of problems that created bitter conflicts during the Reformation. For almost two hundred years, the Chambers flourished; in fact, they achieved great popularity through yearly festivals similar in scope to the Greek Dionysia. The greatest recorded festival occurred in Antwerp in 1561, three years before Shakespeare's birth. Although the Rederyker plays, as the Chamber plays were called, continued to be produced into the seventeenth century, they were finally supplanted in popularity by the professional theatres by 1625. It must be remembered that the plays shared many of the same conventions of triumphal entries, festival celebrations, and Lord Mayor Shows common to Shakespeare's London.  

The plays themselves were concerned with a single, relatively simplistic, predetermined question. Each chamber chose its appropriate answer to the question posed by the king (or local nobility) and instructed its resident poet to work

9In his treatment of the Rederyker plays, Professor Kernodle has based his conclusions on the dialogue and stage directions of the plays themselves. Only a few of the plays are presently extant and none can be found in translation. Of equal importance in Professor Kernodle's study is the relationship between iconographic materials illustrative of the tableaux and the chamber plays. A complete bibliography of extant original materials related to the landjüweels (festival celebrations) is listed in From Art to Theatre. Those materials include actual texts of plays, music, poems, engravings, and emblems. The entire art form has been left relatively untouched by theatre scholars.

10Kernodle, From Art to Theatre, pp. 11-116. The plays have been described as "naive allegorical dramas" by Kernodle. It is the same naive quality seen in the presentation of good and evil in Titus that gives Shakespeare's work an additional feeling of kinship to the plays of the Chambers of Rhetoric.
out an allegorical play to prove or enforce the answer. Again, it must be stressed that the play was allegorical in both subject matter and style. Then, on the appointed day, the societies met, participated in an elaborate pageant procession much like a present-day theme parade such as the Rose Parade, and then presented their works. Titus Andronicus may easily be seen as having elements of a rhetorical theme play. It stresses the problem of personal duty to family and state by offering pietas as a rationale for a well-ordered society. With its triumphal entries and processions, its ritual burials, and the coronation tableau, Act I resembles the elegant pageant procession of the various societies; it serves as a prologue to the allegorical theme or morality play that attempts to answer the question of the day. Act II clearly contains elements of an allegory and a morality play as it presents characters representing virtues and vices in conflict. The approach to the allegorical in Titus is especially curious in that Act II puts greater emphasis on vice than on virtue. It is an antithetical allegorical statement.

Although the theme plays of the chambers had an essentially visual appeal, they were much concerned with language and style. Simple dialogue made the theme plays dramatic; nevertheless, elaborate and florid language remained the most important linguistic feature of the form. That conclusion is supported by the fact that Lady Rhetoric was almost always enshrined above the proceedings in an arched
niche of honor above the stage. Often the allegorical representation of Lady Rhetoric was accomplished by clothing a live actor in the traditional robes of rhetoric. Beneath that allegorical representation and against a background or tableau illustrating the theme of the play, a speaker "spoke the presentatie, which was a rhymed discourse, to explain the picture."\(^{11}\) The speaker, often referred to as the prologue-expositor, might often be joined by actors playing various virtues, vices, or familiar types. Often by means of elaborate machinery, the tableau changed and a new scene would be revealed to represent a development in the story. Within the tableaux themselves, dumb shows and pantomimes were popular conventions. The plays judged best were those that excelled in elegance of staging and rhetorical language.\(^{12}\)

The parallels between the chamber plays and Titus are more than superficial. Act II opens with Aaron describing a royal procession departing the stage. He describes the deposition of virtue and the enshrinement of vice in Rome. The combined staging and language create a tableau of pietas perverted. Throughout the rest of the act, the motif of the expositor describing a tableau is repeated several times, almost always as an allegorical presentation of anti-pietic vice. Act II closes with Marcus describing the ravished Lavinia. It is again a tableau of pietas wronged. The

\(^{11}\)Ibid., p. 117.  \(^{12}\)Ibid., pp. 111-129.
consistency of the motif and the rhetorical style of the poetry provide a literary and dramatic unity for Act II.

One other dramatic practice must be identified before beginning an analysis of the actual text of Act II: the use of the elegant and overblown language for the presentation of violence. Although it cannot be proven that Shakespeare borrowed the technique from the chambers or from Seneca or Ovid, it may be considered as a masterstroke on the part of the playwright. The technique is especially effective for the stage. Essentially, the formula within which the technique is applied is narrative rather than dramatic. It is a technique that Ovid perfected in his *Metamorphoses*. One of his favorite devices was the use of the narrator who, by virtue of his position as story teller, increased the psychic distance between the story and the listener.  

Shakespeare uses this device repeatedly throughout *Titus*, but never so effectively as in Marcus's speech at the end of Act II. Within the dramatic framework, the speaker enhances a narrative device with highly poetic language. The language is marked by a florid style, excessive refinement in vocabulary and phraseology, an overabundance of figures of speech, and allusions to classical history and mythology. It is the combination of that linguistic style and spectacular violence that prompted Dover Wilson to conclude that

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Shakespeare was really burlesquing the dramaturgical style of his contemporaries. On the contrary, Shakespeare must be credited with a serious dramatic purpose here. Granted, there is some difficulty in seeing a meaningful relationship between the scenes of violence and the florid style of the language accompanying the violence; but it can be shown that such language has the power to minimize the horror of the dramatic moment. The example of Marcus speaking to the ravished Lavinia is an excellent case in point. At first glance the florid language of Marcus scarcely suits the bloody appearance of Lavinia, whose tongue has been ripped from her mouth.

Marcus comments:

Alas, a crimson river of warm blood,
Like to a bubbling fountain stirred with wind
Doth rise and fall between thy rosed lips,
Coming and going with thy honey breath.

(2. 4. 22-25)

The very fact that Marcus serves as a narrator provides a certain psychic distance from the horror of the scene. The audience discovers the brutality of the situation through Marcus's eyes. The overblown language also distracts the attention from the horror of the violated to the outrage of the speaker. The focus is on the narrator, transformed by the intensity of his emotion into the abstraction of the emotion itself. Thus the speaker and his language serve as a sort of microscope through which the horror is magnified even beyond

the natural proportions of the body and isolated from the body itself. Thus the suffering person is forgotten for the moment and the audience sees only the overwhelming reality of the horror. In effect, Lavinia's wound, now detached from the suffering person, is seen only in an ethical and cosmic scheme. Such is the function of the language in Act II of *Titus*. In that manner, the language directly intensifies or magnifies the results of anti-pietic acts and indirectly amplifies the virtue of *pietas* as the primary force for dramatic action.

The overuse of rhetorical devices in poetic drama has frequently been viewed as a contamination of the poetic or dramatic form. The general cry has been that writers have all too often strained for brilliance of style to the neglect of manufacturing good plots and characters. Shakespeare has not escaped the attack. Certainly aware of the popular acceptance of rhetorical elegance in poetic drama, Shakespeare obviously filled *Titus* with a diction whose brilliance of style also served an important dramatic function. Viewed within the conventions of the rhetorical-poetic tradition of its time and of the Redberyker plays, *Titus Andronicus* can be seen, in Act II, to be essentially an allegorical presentation of the antithesis of *pietas*. The thesis will be illustrated in a careful analysis of the text itself.

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With the entrance of Aaron, Shakespeare introduces the symbol of disorder in *Titus Andronicus*. Rarely, in Shakespeare or in other dramatic literature, has there been so callous and so consummate a villain. Aaron is one of "those artists in villainy who take delight in evil for its own sake." His is what might be called in melodrama, lip-smacking villainy. Nowhere, other than in the pleasure of evil, can there be found any obvious motivation for his crimes. He is the antithesis of Titus, who personified commitment to good in Act I. The parallel does not end there. Because of his rigid conception of piety, Titus's will is inexorable. Aaron's will matches Titus's in its inflexible pursuit of Rome's collapse; and although they confront each other on only one occasion, they serve as metaphors or emblems for the cosmic forces of good and evil. Thus the major combatants in the morality play have been introduced.

Before actually dealing with Aaron's first words in the play, it is necessary that several items be clarified concerning the actual physical entrance of Aaron. Some editors of the play simply have Aaron remain on stage at the
end of Act I. Presumably that is to facilitate the flow of stage action, the idea being that Aaron should step forward and begin speaking of Tamora as she exits to the wedding dinner. Allowing Aaron to remain on stage after all the others are gone preserves a special sort of continuity of action, and the sequence strongly resembles the Rederyker plays with a narrator-expositor describing the tableau, in this case, a recessional tableau of evil. Perhaps that was the intention originally since Aaron has been present from the beginning of the play without uttering a word. In Shakespeare's day, a silent black certainly would have created great dramatic interest. Any black character had a recognized symbolic significance of evil. Aaron's silence would additionally have created a sense of impending evil. To have left him alone on the stage seems the kind of trick a master craftsman would have played on his audience if for nothing more than to build tension. To have removed Aaron and then brought him back to the stage would have been anticlimactic.

Aaron speaks of the departing Tamora and the play enters a new phase:

New climeth Tamora Olympus' top,  
Safe out of Fortune's shot and sits aloft,  
Secure of thunder's crack or lightning flash,  
Advanced above pale envy's reach.  

(1-4)

Aaron's speech differs greatly from Titus's opening lines. While Titus spoke out of the mourning tears of victory, Aaron speaks of the glory of conquest. Titus spoke with solemnity, dignity, and pietas; Aaron's speech is filled with bacchic
lust and diabolical vice. Titus came to bury his dead; Aaron remains to bury Rome. Aaron's language is clearly un-Roman with its ornate quality. In fact, that ornate quality creates a picture of a baroque Machiavellian mind and heart. In addition, by metaphorically applying elements of classical mythology to Tamora, Aaron begins the process of euhemeristic deification of the New Empress. The allusion to thunder and lightning entertains the hope that Tamora sits above Jupiter, the one god upon whom Titus depends. Aaron spiritually ascends with Tamora to a lofty peak from which the two of them will eventually tumble.

He continues his deification of Tamora in a conceit clearly intended to focus the eyes of the audience on the heavens of the sixteenth century playhouse:17

As when the golden son salutes the morn,  
And, having gilt the ocean with his beams,  
Gallops the zodiac in his glistening coach,  
And overlooks the highest peering hills,  
So Tamora.

(5-9)

Aaron's apostrophe to Tamora has more than just a poetic significance. He unites her to the planets and astrological symbols above the stage. He has joined her to the planet Saturn and thus foreshadows dark and evil actions on her part: "And virtue stoops and trembles at her frown" (line 11).

17The reader is directed to George Kernodle's work previously cited. His treatment on the "heavens" in the sixteenth century playhouse has provided the idea for the staging concept indicated here. More will be said of this in a later chapter when discussing the "arrows scene" in Act IV.
Aaron realizes that Tamora's actions invite the resentment of the gods, but he is willing to share with her the luxuries of the new golden age. His willingness stems from the sexual control he holds over her whom he holds "fettered in amorous chains" (line 15). In effect Aaron controls the world through Tamora who now controls the Roman Emperor and before whom virtue stoops. The poetry implies that Roman virtue (pietas) has been perverted by lust and unscrupulous power.

Then, true to the Machiavellian ideal, Aaron indicates his plan to dissemble:

I will be bright and shine in pearl and gold
To wait upon the new-made Empress.
To wait, said I? To wanton with this queen,
This goddess, this Semiramis, this nymph,
This siren, that will charm Rome's Saturnine
And see his shipwrack and his commonweal's.

(19-24)

It is a heady moment for Aaron, filled with the anticipation of incredible things to come. It is not action that elevates the play here; rather, it is language painting a picture of moral depravity as a counterpart to the virtuous Titus temporarily removed from power in Rome. The poetical devices used in the speech help to give it both an ornate and a Machiavellian quality. The accumulation of words having one meaning (goddess, Semiramis, nymph, siren) in Aaron's description is an example of congeries. The actual arrangement of

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18Lee A. Sonino, A Handbook to Sixteenth-Century Rhetoric (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968), passim. All devices mentioned in the context of this study are those collected and defined by Sonino. No further annotation will be made in the treatment of rhetorical devices.
the above-mentioned words is an example of brachylogia, the placement of words in staccato speech with the intervals distinguished by pauses or commas. Both devices have the ability to amplify or intensify the stature of the object described. Thus Tamora's character to this point in the play has been amplified not so much by action as by diction.

In painting a picture of Tamora in highly ornamental language, Shakespeare has utilized the language associated with show pictures and show architecture of the Rederyker stage. He has also adapted the language of the tableaux vivants and the Chambers of Rhetoric in establishing a picture of Aaron and that of the departing Tamora. Such a usage occurs repeatedly throughout Act II, especially in moments of heated passions and violent actions. Eugene Waith explains that the effect of such language keeps the heated passions and violent actions theatrically cool and detached while intensifying the objects described.¹⁹ Jack E. Reese has concluded that the highly formal and stylized language in the play, especially in its moments of great emotion, "subdues (or 'abstracts') the horror."²⁰

The opening of Act II is important both to scholars and directors of the play. The literary allusions and references have changed the tone of the play quickly and sharply:

non-pietic factions control Rome and have transformed Rome into a venerian swamp. The absence of action and the linguistic style contrast radically with the sparse, almost military, verse and action of Act I. Titus's first speech to Lavinia clearly demonstrates the difference:

Kind Rome, that hast thus lovingly reserved
The cordial of mine age to glad my heart!
Lavinia, live, outlive thy father's days
And fame's eternal date, for virtue's praise!

(169-172)

One of the most important things that Aaron says in his opening speech is his own name. The name Aaron contains within it the antithesis of order and virtue. Such a symbolic meaning would have been known by the Elizabethan audience through popular literature of the day. At the end of the sixteenth century in a popular book on herbs, John Gerard discussed the Cockow-pint as a herb with blackish spots, blemishes, and purple specks. The image was that of moral turpitude. In addition, the plant was called Arum in Latin and Aron in Greek. Moreover, Gerard indicated that some herbalists identified the Cockow-pint with the herb called Dracontium, translated the dragon. Thus there would have been a popular image already established in the minds of the sixteenth century audience of Aaron as a dragon that lived in the habitat of the Cockow-pint: unsavory areas, near ditches and swamps, under hedges, and in shadowy places.²¹

All of this, added to the popular attitude about blacks, creates a formidable villain even before he opens his mouth. The picture is completed with the recognition of one more image or metaphor. When Aaron says he will "mount her pitch" (line 14), he uses a term of falconry and thus portrays himself as Tamora's bird of prey. At the play's end when Tamora's body is thrown in the streets as food for birds of prey, the irony of Aaron's words becomes apparent.

Enter Chiron and Demetrius, braving. Aaron steps aside so as not to be seen. Tamora's sons are arguing about their chances of sexual favors from Lavinia. Demetrius opens one of the most colorful passages in the scene by attacking Chiron with an alliterative barrage reminiscent of a schoolboy poet:

Chiron, thy years wants wit, thy wits wants edge
And manners, to intrude where I am graced
And may, for aught thou knowest, effected be.

(27-29)

The entire passage is a thinly veiled threat. Demetrius holds back from telling Chiron that he may be the recipient of some sort of physical violence. There should be no doubt, however, in Chiron's mind what Demetrius means. The language makes it clear that Demetrius is dealing in a circuitous kind of statement that leads to fuller understanding. That is ennoia. The alliteration and syntactical barbarisms are easier seen. The repetitive use of the word wit is the application of the device called gradatio to the passage. The dominant motif in Demetrius's language then is that of
repetition. It is as common to his speech as the extended metaphor is to Aaron's

The alliteration, the transference of the word *wit* from the objective to the subjective position, and the resulting problem with verb agreement clearly show in the person of Demetrius a somewhat illiterate character who makes an attempt at sophisticated language. Chiron's response is that of a younger man, a little less pretentious but just as lacking as his brother in both learning and the social graces. While Demetrius threatens with words, Chiron resorts to a promise of real physical force:

'Tis not the difference of a year or two
Makes me less gracious or thee more fortunate.
I am as able and as fit as thou
To serve and to deserve my mistress' grace;
And that my sword upon thee shall approve,
And plead my passions for Lavinia's love.
(32-37)

The following sequence is filled with sexual allusions, hardly pietic sentiments for new Roman princes.

Dem. Why, boy, although our mother, unadvised,
Gave you a dancing-rapier by your side,
Are you so desperate grown to threat your friends?
Go to! Have your lath glued within your sheath
Till you know better how to handle it.

Chir. Meanwhile, sir, with the little skill I have,
Full well shalt thou perceive how much I dare.

Dem. Ay, boy, grow ye so brave?
(40-47)

They draw.

The language of the courtly duel and the language of the streets blend together in a ominous manner. They would even go so far as to kill each other to achieve the same thing Saturninus accused Bassianus of doing. Their conduct shows how quickly
the state of Rome has changed with the reign of Saturninus. There is no concern for propriety, family honor, or Roman ethics. The clever but ribald metaphor in which dancing-rapiers (anachronistic here) are compared to male sex organs indicates that the long night of the Saturnalia has begun. Demetrius and Chiron are the cubs of the wilderness of tigers.

Aaron. Coming forward.

He interrupts the brothers before they can engage in battle and warns them of their foolishness:

So near the Emperor's palace dare ye draw
And maintain such a quarrel openly?
(49-50)

They resist his advice but they finally put up their swords. Their tenacity is an indication of kinship to Tamora; they are not easily put off:

Dem. Not I, till I have sheathed
My rapier in his bosom . . . .
(57-58)

The boyishness and immaturity reflected in that and in other speeches make the sequence slightly comical; later when they taunt the ravished Lavinia, the true nature of their lasciviousness erases any shred of humor.

There are several important considerations to be made about the motivation of the three men at this point in the play. Never does any one of them indicate that he acts from a sense of revenge: in fact, the actual motivation seems quite the opposite.

It is a matter of lust in the case of the brothers. Aaron disputes their motivation and warns them to hearken to
Roman law and custom. Twice he invokes the honor and prestige of their mother as reasons for their not acting rashly or foolishly at the present time. Aaron pleads not out of any pietic respect for Rome and her laws but rather that the time is not ripe:

What, is Lavinia then become so loose,
Or Bassianus so degenerate,
That for her love such quarrels may be broached
Without controlment, justice or revenge?
Young lords, beware! and should the Empress know
This discord's ground, the music would not please. (69-74)

The cynicism contained in Aaron's position is twofold. The brothers apparently do not know that Aaron himself is violating one of the most sacred pietic laws of his newly adopted homeland by his adulterous affair with Tamora. Further, he is not really concerned with any moral issue.

Aaron has yet to indicate any motivation other than a sheer love of evil. His opening soliloquy contains within it the information that he has no particular axe to grind. He simply loves doing immoral things. In that regard, Charles Norton Coe has commented that "Aaron is bad because the plot requires a villain." Such a view seems much too simplistic. In effect, acceptance of Mr. Coe's conclusion would reduce Titus Andronicus to the level of a melodrama. True, Titus needs a villain structurally; but Shakespeare has provided the plot with plenty of those. Aaron has a special function

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as the symbol of evil incarnate; in Rome he is the antithesis of pietas.

Furthermore, Aaron's knowledge of Roman culture and law is especially sophisticated for a newcomer to the city:

Why, are ye mad? or know ye not in Rome
How furious and impatient they be,
And cannot brook eompetitors in love?
(80-82)

In fact, throughout the play, Aaron's knowledge of things Roman helps to support the suspicion that he possesses some sort of supernatural power beyond that of any person in Rome. A black man in this role would have meant only one thing to the Elizabethan audience: the devil. Thus, with Aaron as the master strategist for evil in the play, one who will invert the whole moral order of Rome, Titus Andronicus shares at least some of the attributes of the allegorical morality play.

Before Aaron reveals his strategy for obtaining Lavinia's favors, he allows the brothers to excite themselves with thoughts of sexual conquest. Demetrius bursts forth in a maxim reminiscent of Ovid or Andreas Cappelanus:

She is a woman, therefore may be wooed;
She is a woman, therefore may be won;
She is Lavinia, therefore must be loved.
What, man! more water glideth by the mill
Than wots the miller of; and easy it is
Of a cut loaf to steal a shive, we know.

23Ovid's book, The Art of Love, for which he was exiled, virtually reduced human relations to the level of sexual seduction. In the Provencal during the Twelfth Century, Andreas Cappelanus pioneered similar ideals of human sexuality in The Art of Courtly Love.
Though Bassianus be the Emperor's brother
Better than he have worn Vulcan's badge
(89-96)

Aaron whispers the obligatory aside: "Ay, and as good as Saturninus may" (line 97). Only Aaron realizes the irony in Demetrius's last line and how close the young man has come to unwittingly knowing the truth of the Aaron-Tamora relationship.

The poetry is again overloaded with alliteration, mythological allusion, and anaphora (the repetition of the same word at the beginning of a sentence). Demetrius indulges in another repetitive device in the same speech with the same word: woman. It is the use of diaphora, which occurs when the same word is repeated, emphasizing by the repetition a particular aspect of its meaning. Demetrius makes it very clear that to him a woman has the primary function of sexual gratification. The heat of Demetrius's poetry has stirred even the blood of Aaron. He asks the two:

Would it offend you, then,
That both should speed?
(110-111)

The brothers are unable to resist the opportunity Aaron promises and the three prepare for the rape.

Aaron advises the brothers of the best means of getting Lavinia. They are to wait until the hunt and find some "unfrequented" (line 127) spot in the forest

Fitted by kind for rape and villainy.
Single you thither then this dainty doe,
And strike her home by force if not by words.
(128-130)
His speech to the young men is filled with images of the hunt and classical allusions to the rape of Lucrece. Aaron's speech paints a picture of a new and disorderly Rome, unwittingly created by the pietas of Titus. His reference to the hunt, proposed by Titus, also brings to mind the fact that it will be the immediate occasion for the death of Bassianus and the ravishment of Lavinia. Aaron concludes the speech with a series of alliterative phrases that underline his Byzantine mind and magnify the horror of the future:

The Emperor's court is like the house of Fame,
The palace full of tongues, of eyes and ears.  
The woods are ruthless, dreadful, deaf, and dull:  
There speak, and strike, brave boys, and take your turns;  
There serve your lust, shadowed from Heaven's eye,  
And revel in Lavinia's treasury.  

(138-143)

Demetrius concludes the Machiavellian parely by comparing the heat of his passions to the flames of hell: "Per Styga, per manes vehor" (I am carried through Stygia and the souls of hell). How much differently the young Goth sees the meaning of manes in comparison to young Lucius and Titus when they sacrificed "ad manes fratrum" in Act I. Even the souls of the Romans have their antithesis in Act II.

Exeunt
Scene II. A forest near Rome.

Enter Titus Andronicus and his three sons, making a noise with hounds and horns; and Marcus.

As the evil cohorts depart to tell Tamora of their plans, Titus enters for the solemn hunt. It is a typically Shakespearean scene change with time condensed to an absolute minimum. In just a few moments the boys will return with their mother. Hardly enough time will have elapsed for them to give even the briefest information to Tamora. That is of no great importance since the use of condensed time is an accustomed convention of Elizabethan drama. At this point in the play, the technique works well, especially if the sounds of the horns and hounds rise under the final lines of the previous scene.

Titus speech reaffirms the pietic characterization established in Act I:

The hunt is up, the morn is bright and gay,
The fields are fragrant, and the woods are green. Uncouple here, and let us make a bay,
And wake the Emperor and his lovely bride,
And rouse the Prince, and ring a hunter's peal,
That all the court may echo with the noise. Sons, let it be your charge, as it is ours, To attend the Emperor's person carefully. I have been troubled in my sleep this night But dawning day new comfort hath inspired. (1-10)

There is no rancor or even remembrance of things past. Titus is still the dutiful servant to the Emperor; and although the yesterday is forgotten, Titus has been troubled in his sleep. It is as though he has had a premonition of dire events to come. Nonetheless, he has maintained a firm hold on his
own pietas; and his diction, so poetically different from that of Aaron's opening speech, marks Titus's attempt to establish a sense of order in Rome. Furthermore, it is still Titus, not Saturninus, who moves Rome to action in this scene.

Here a cry of hounds, and wind horns in a peal. Then enter Saturninus, Tamora, Bassianus, Lavinia, Chiron, Demetrius, and their attendants.

As the Emperor's party enters, Titus speaks in greeting:

Many good morrows to your Majesty;
Madam, to you as many and as good.
I promised your grace a hunter's peal.

(11-13)

The greeting has a curiously alliterative ring to it that is unlike Titus's normal way of speaking. He has been slightly influenced by the new order of things. His normal Roman directness of speech has been abandoned for the convoluted language of the court. One thing, however, has remained constant: Titus's unthinking piety compels him to usurp the place of honor and speak first. He cannot wish the Emperor well quickly enough; and true to his previous behavior, Saturninus responds by ignoring Titus and speaking to the ladies. He can think only of the bridal chamber and his new partner in lasciviousness. Saturninus remarks that it might perhaps be too early for the new brides. His indelicate innuendo is not misunderstood. Bassianus intervenes and asks Lavinia if Saturninus is correct. Her answer can easily be interpreted as piety chiding the Emperor for his lack of taste in mixed company: "I say no: I have been broad awake two hours and more" (17-18). Lavinia might as well have told
the Emperor that one does not speak so easily and quickly of his wedding night. Lavinia reveals a side to her personality not heretofore expressed. She has wit and intelligence in addition to modesty and piety.

The scene ends in poetic images of the hunt battling with the sounds of hounds and horns. Demetrius brings the action to a close with a metaphor of a different kind of hunt:

Chiron, we hunt not we, with horse nor hound,  
But hope to pluck a dainty doe to ground.  
(29-30)

After a brief display of piety, he brings the world of Rome back again to the wilderness of tigers.

Exeunt.
Scene III. A lonely part of the forest.

Enter Aaron alone, with a bag of gold.

Aaron speaks to open the scene. His words strengthen previous impressions of him as the primary spokesman for the new golden age:

He that had wit would think that I had none,
To bury so much gold under a tree,
And never after inherit it.
Let him that thinks of me so abjectly
Know that this gold must coin a stratagem,
Which, cunningly effected, will beget
A very excellent piece of villainy.

The use of the most precious of elements, gold, as a means of effecting some villainy reflects the Machiavellian thinking that the ends justify any means. Even more sinister is Aaron's congratulating himself on his own evil-doing.

Hides the gold.

Enter Tamora, alone, to the Moor.

Reveling in the glory of her new power and indulging in ornate language, Tamora joins her lover Aaron for a celebration of their mutual victory. She finds a strangely melancholy Moor:

My lovely Aaron, wherefore lookst thou sad
When everything doth make a gleeful boast?

The mellifluous poetry, which follows her greeting, has an Ovidian flavor; and the long recitative recalls the recital dramas of Seneca.

Tamora's description of the forest differs greatly from Aaron's or Titus's. She sees the woods as a venereal bed for
their "golden slumber" (line 26). As an example of dramatic or lyrical poetry, the speech is surely one of the most impressive in the play; and it helps to create a picture of the new woman of Rome, a direct antithesis of the pietic model, Lavinia. Tamora offers herself in an act of sexual immolation:

The birds chant melody on every bush;  
The snake lies rolled in the cheerful sun;  
The green leaves quiver with the cooling wind,  
And make a checker'd shadow on the ground;  
Under their sweet shade, Aaron, let us sit,  
And, whilst the babbling echo mocks the hounds,  
Replying shrilly to the well-tuned horns,  
As if a double hunt were heard at once,  
Let us sit down and mark their yellowing noise;  
And, after conflict such as was supposed  
The wandering prince and Dido once enjoy'd,  
When with a happy storm they were surpris'd  
And curtain'd with a counsel-keeping cave,  
We may, each wreathed in the other's arms,  
Our pastimes done, possess a golden slumber;  
While hounds and horns and sweet melodious birds  
Are unto us as is a nurse's song  
Of lullaby to bring her babe asleep.  
(12-29)

Tamora's picture of the forest is in reality a picture of the new Rome characterized by shadow, shade, and caves, all appropriate places for hiding evil deeds. The commingling of those elements with the images of gold tie Tamora to Aaron as co-celebrant in the victory of the Saturnalian golden age. A most fitting example of dramatic irony occurs in the speech with the allusion to Aeneas who eventually abandoned Dido in order to fulfill his pietic duties to family and country. The fullness of the irony is not obvious until Aaron's later abandonment of Tamora.

Aaron rejects Tamora's advances in what may be one of
the cruelest moments in the play. He has no time for her sexual advances now:

Madam, though Venus govern your desires, Saturn is dominator over mine.

(30-31)

The logic of his response bears close investigation. Tamora is ruled by the venerian influence permitted in the reign of the Titan-turned-emperor, Saturn. Aaron indicates that he is ruled or governed by the planet Saturn. That explains his melancholia. More important, Aaron remains consistent in his pursuit of evil; and even Tamora cannot momentarily distract Aaron from his resolve to destroy Rome.

Aaron continues in what is to be the first real disclosure of his inner self. By means of an extended metaphor, he speaks of himself as a deadly and quiet adder, a fitting Saturnalian tool of evil and the appropriate symbol of the devil:

What signifies my deadly-standing eye, My silence, and mine cloudy melancholy, My fleece of wooly hair that now uncurls Even as an adder when she doth unroll To do some fatal execution?

(32-36)

Tamora had spoken too soon. The snake was not rolled in the cheerful sun.24

Aaron warms to his subject as he recites a catalogue

of evils burning within him:

Vengeance is in my heart, death in my hand,
Blood and revenge are hammering in my head.

(38-39)

Critics favoring the revenge theory have found support for their argument in those lines. The most important ingredient, however, is missing; Aaron has no revenge motivation for any of these acts. In fact, he has every possible advantage for power and security in Rome without any of the evil doings. Actually, unless he is the devil incarnate, he has no grounds whatsoever for any machinations except sheer perversity and an inordinate love of evil. Such a view of Aaron as the devil, however, would reduce the play to a morality play, which it resembles in several ways; but Titus is much more than that. Shakespeare knew what he was about in making Aaron the archetypal Machiavellian prince. In that guise, Aaron serves a much more dramatic and frightening function than the devil or a revenger, especially since Titus will have more than several ways of dealing with a Machiavell. The only way to cope with the devil is through prayer, and prayer is hardly the stuff from which great drama flows.

In the space of a few words, Aaron makes Tamora a party to the intended crime; however, he has a special surprise. He has even deceived the two brothers into thinking that Lavinia is their only prey. Aaron has also planned the death of Bassianus and seems to have more than rape in mind for Lavinia when he refers to her as "Philomel" who "must lose her tongue today" (line 43). Some critics have mentioned this
apparent inconsistency of planning on Aaron's part as an instance of bad playwriting. On the contrary, it is a brilliant stroke of characterization and plot condensation. By this time it is completely acceptable dramatically that Aaron would have such hidden thoughts and plans. How he reveals them is simply a matter of dramatic convenience and coincidence.

Aaron quickly closes his speech with a warning that he and Tamora have been sighted by their future victims.

Enter Bassianus and Lavinia.

The hunt, originally viewed as a means of bringing Rome together again, has begun its function in the drama. It has blindly played its victims into the hands of their greatest enemy. The abrupt termination of Aaron's speech by the apparently unmotivated entrance of Bassianus and Lavinia is an example of another Shakespearean convention, used especially in Titus. When the playwright wants or needs action, he provides it immediately. He delays only when he wishes to amplify the situation by some poetic statement. Now that he has sufficiently described the antithesis of pietas as a worthy foe of that virtue, Shakespeare places the two in combat.

But Tamora does not wish to leave the Moor; she clings to him with: "Ah, my sweet Moor, sweeter to me than life" (line 51). Aaron again refuses the gesture and orders Tamora to engage the young couple until he can send Demetrius and Chiron to help her. Aaron has overcome the temptation to dally; and having primed Tamora for battle, he makes his
Exit. Tamora's sweet words have failed her twice in short order.

As Bassianus and Lavinia approach the Empress, the young prince foolishly taunts Tamora as the goddess Diana. Tamora rises to the occasion and threatens him with a good cuckolding. Lavinia imprudently accuses Tamora of having already cuckolded her new husband the Emperor by her "experiments" (line 69) with the Moor. Tamora apparently does not stand a chance against the two. She listens as Bassianus describes her and Aaron as if they were twin Cuckow-pint plants:

Believe me, Queen, your swarthy Cimmerian
Doth make your honor of his body's hue,
Spotted, detested, and abominable.
(72-74)

Lavinia sends a final barb at Tamora as she turns to leave, and the young couple vow to tell Saturninus of what they know. Tamora can simply mutter: "Why, I have patience to endure all this" (line 88).

Some critics have found Lavinia exceptionally precocious in this scene. Structurally her precocity is important for it helps to motivate Tamora to do harm to Lavinia, but there is no reason for Lavinia not to behave as she does in these circumstances. Joseph Kramer solves the problem quite adequately in his study:

Lavinia is behaving much as she ought, according to Elizabethan standards, when she confronts and reviles Tamora. The Elizabethans were not overly fastidious about outspoken virtue in women. Seeing evil, Lavinia in no uncertain or mincing
terms reviles it, as true virtue should.25
That statement of Kramer's comes at the end of a long thesis that argues for Lavinia's function as metaphorical not metaphysical virginity or chastity in the play. His argument seems especially worthy in the light of the allegorical nature of the entire act in which Lavinia confronts the symbol of venerian pleasure in Tamora. To support his argument, Kramer refers to three works of the late sixteenth century in which the virtue of chastity in the guise of allegorical characterization upbraids licentiousness: Golden Book of the Leaden Gods (1577), Three Ladies of London (1584), and Virtuous Octavia (1598). Kramer concludes his argument in a noteworthy manner:

Lavinia functions in the drama as the emblem of virtue, honor, and order, both civil and moral. As I have already suggested, her name recalls a golden age of Roman heroism. She is Aeneas's Lavinia, Lucrece, and Virginia. Specifically she is the embodiment of Titus's vision of an ideal Rome—the Rome that Titus's own purblindness rapes, mutilates, and finally destroys.26

Enter Chiron and Demetrius.
The mother and her whelps are united, and she urges to take revenge for her outraged honor. Her reasons are specious; in fact, what she tells her sons is nothing more than an artful fabrication. In a highly melodramatic fashion Tamora again calls upon highly ornate poetry to assist her in proving a

26Ibid., pp. 154-155.
point. Her description of the forest this time is far different from the one she described for Aaron. The picture now is one of complete moral desolation:

Have I not reason, think you, to look pale?  
These two have ticed me hither to this place.  
A barren detested vale you see it is:  
The trees, though summer, yet forlorn and lean,  
Overcome with moss and baleful misteltoe.  
Here never shines the sun; here nothing breeds,  
Unless the nightly owl or fatal raven.  
And when they showed me this abhorred pit,  
They told me, here, at dead time of the night,  
A thousand fiends, a thousand hissing snakes,  
Ten thousand swelling toads, as many urchins,  
Would make such fearful and confused cries,  
As any mortal body hearing it  
Should straight fall mad, or else die suddenly.  
No sooner had they told this hellish tale,  
But straight they told me they would bind me here  
Unto the body of a dismal yew,  
And leave me to this miserable death.  
And then they called me foul adultress,  
Lascivious Goth, and all the bitterest terms  
That ever did hear to such effect:  
And had you not be wondrous fortune come  
This vengeance on me had they executed.  
Revenge it, as you love your mother's life,  
Or be ye not henceforth called my children.

(92-115)

The extended metaphor prompts several critical responses. It is difficult to accept revenge as an honest motivation for Tamora at this time. She acts here in a fit of anger and ruffled pride. Had she made at least a passing reference to events of the preceding day, her motivation might seem to have a certain honorable quality. A second

27 Some scholars of the Roman culture have attempted to identify the mistletoe with the Golden Bough that Aeneas used as a passport to the Underworld. Their strongest proof is that of Roman tradition rather than any precise evidence.
response pertains to the lack of verisimilitude indicated by the poetry. Shakespeare offers a third description of the forest, apparently intending to show the state of mind or viewpoint of the speaker rather than actually describe the woods. The playwright is obviously not dealing with a realistic presentation of the setting. His purpose is to create a mental picture reflecting the soul of the speaker and to surround the scene with a verbal environment in which horrible deeds are about to occur. That is the effect created in earlier speeches by Aaron and Titus. Such seems the case here with Tamora. Rarely has Shakespeare resorted to such grotesquerie. In Richard III (1. 2.), Anne reaches such a level in her attack on Richard. The witches in Macbeth likewise delve into the cauldron of ugly language. Here in Titus Shakespeare has created a picture of hell that diffuses the horror of the terrible deeds that are to follow. Nothing happens within the play that can measure up to Tamora's description; only a soul such as hers could conjure up so frightening a fantasmagoria.

In an instant Bassianus lies dead of two stab wounds. Then with Satanic glee the three conspirators taunt Lavinia in the crudest sort of game before they remove her from the stage. As Lavinia pleads for mercy, she reminds us of Tamora in Act I who pleaded for the life of her son. Lavinia begs:

O Tamora! thou bearest a woman's face--
(line 140)

But Tamora will not listen and orders the young men to remove
the girl. Lavinia's plea bears some comment since the words help to characterize her. Whether taunting Tamora earlier or begging for mercy, Lavinia has established the pattern of cutting short her comments but nevertheless allowing the idea to be completed by implication. Lavinia has implied by her words that beneath Tamora's human face is a soul of a beast. Thus Shakespeare employs the poetic device, *paralepsis*, both to develop a character and stimulate action.

Since Tamora does not listen, Lavinia turns to the brothers. Their lack of sympathy reduces her to the highest poetic level she will attain in the play:

'Tis true: the raven doth not hatch a lark.
Yet I have heard, Oh, could I find it now!--
The lion, moved with pity, did endure
To have his princely paw pared away.
Some say that ravens foster forlorn children,
The whiles their own birds famish in their nests.
O, be to me, though thy hard heart say no,
Nothing so kind, but something pitiful!

(156-163)

It is a remarkable speech filled with allusions to fables, juvenile alliteration, and an empty plea for help. It clearly shows the pathetic state of the young woman desperately searching for some model of mercy with which to convince Demetrius and Chiron to spare her. There is none and she is reduced to adapting the nearest possible object in hopes of obtaining merch. Neither lions nor ravens move their hearts. Such poetical adaptation is called *catachresis*. Shakespeare has invested the scene with embellished poetry and in doing so has reduced the horror by distracting attention from the horror of the potential violation to the outrage of the
Tamora herself begs ignorance of what Lavinia is trying to say and again commands that the boys remove the young woman. When Lavinia presses Tamora further for pity in the name of Titus, Tamora responds:

Hadst thou in person ne'er offended me,
Even for his sake am I pitiless.
Remember, boys, I poured forth tears in vain
To save your brother from the sacrifice;
But fierce Andronicus would not relent.

(169-173)

Clearly Tamora is acting from a false sense of honor and from personal malice. She does not even hint that Titus killed her son for no reason; in fact, she has apparently accepted the death of Alarbus as part of the Roman ritual of sacrifice to the dead. Her quarrel with Titus is that he lacked pity or mercy. She has not yet been able to understand that what Titus did was not for his own personal gain but for the sake of duty. In Titus's case there was no will to mercy; in Tamora's there is no mercy to will.

Lavinia makes one last plea, to which Tamora answers in a way that shows a motivation of lust rather than of retribution in her actions:

So, should I rob my sweet sons of their fee.
No, let them satisfy their lust on thee.

(188-189)

The brothers quickly gag Lavinia and drag Bassianus's body to the pit where Aaron had apparently instructed them to hide the dead Prince.
Demetrius throws the body to Bassianus into the pit; then exeunt Demetrius and Chiron, dragging Lavinia off.

Truly Rome is a wilderness of tigers, and the tomb of pietas has been replaced by the pit of hell.

Tamora remains onstage for one last comment. She declares that she will not be happy until "all the Andronici be made away" (line 201). Hers is not a matter of simple revenge; she is involved in a struggle for cultural supremacy. A glimmer of hope, however, reflects off her last words. She will seek out her "lovely Moor" to satisfy an even greater interest and a more urgent need than destruction of the Andronici. Because of her own lust, the lascivious Queen of Goths may yet be diverted from her plan to destroy Titus and his family.

Exit.

Just as the central action of Act I brought a focus onto the tomb, so the central action of Act II brings a focus to another kind of tomb—the loathsome pit. Bassianus has been tossed into the pit as a sacrifice to Tamora, the newly enshrined venerian goddess of the Saturnalian golden age. The symbolism of the previous sequence fits the antithetical nature of the act. Shakespeare has suitably exchanged the glory of the Andronici monument rising in the sight of all for the deserted pit hidden in the gloom of the forest. It is at this point that the action once again moves quickly in a new direction.
Enter Aaron, with Quintus and Martius.

Aaron's knowledge of the murder assists him as he directs Titus's sons to the pit. His plan has worked well up till now, and he has almost succeeded in his first venture against the Andronici. With Saturn as his dominator, he has acted appropriately in the dark reaches offstage away from the action. He has yet to raise a hand in violence. Shakespeare has effectively orchestrated the action of the play by periodically removing Aaron from the stage and allowing the audience to supply the details of his machinations.

At this point Aaron has tricked Quintus and Martius into following him to the pit, where a panther is supposedly sleeping. Here the symbolism of Act II reaches into popular Christian tradition. In the allegorical works, both religious and secular, of the middle ages and Renaissance, the panther was considered to be a figure for the Christ and one of the greatest enemies of the dragon. Along with the panther, the hart (deer or doe) was also a mortal enemy of the dragon. The comparison of Bassianus and Lavinia to those two animals, the religious symbolism would not have been lost on Shakespeare's audience. Furthermore, the irony of Titus's invitation to the hunt would now also be obvious: at the end of Act I, he had invited the Emperor and his court to "hunt the panther and the hart" (line 516) with him. The Christ symbolism is fortified later when Martius describes Bassianus as a "slaughtered lamb" (line 238), the most common allegorical figure
for the Christ. In the light of those allusions, it is possible to perceive Act II as a kind of allegorical morality play. Shakespeare has not abandoned his argument for pietas; he has elevated and identified it with the cosmic Christian cause by pitting the forces of pietas against the forces of evil incarnate. Pietas has lost the battle for the present.

As Quintus and Martius enter with Aaron, they both comment on their inability to see as well as they should:

Quin. My sight is very dull, whate'er it bodes.
Mart. And mine, I promise you: were it not for shame, Well could I leave our sport to sleep awhile.

(208-210)

Falls into the pit.

The concern with failing eyesight and sleep reflect the fact that the brothers have come under the influence of the moody Saturn as have others in the play. More will be said of that later. This scene reflects a macabre kind of comic relief played over the body of the dead Bassianus. Although the scene may be in questionable taste, it reveals an important point about the Andronicus family.

Martius and Quintus have undergone some sort of transformation since their stalwart defense of Lavinia in Act I. Have they celebrated too much during the previous night or have they actually fallen under the influence of the new order? Thy symbolism seems clear. The device of the

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fatigued brothers, one of whom lacks clear vision, seems, on the one hand, to be merely a convenience to keep the plot moving; yet, on the other, it seems to represent, symbolically, the traditional effect of the Dragon upon his victims. In the first case, the disposition of the brothers makes it believable that they are unable to get out of the pit moments later. Thus, when Aaron brings Saturninus to show him the awful deed, Quintus and Martius become prime suspects in the murder of Bassianus.

An explanation for the second alternative can be found in the literary and dramatic conventions of Shakespeare's day. Jospeh Kramer has also explored this area:

One or more characters fatigued and desirous of sleep (or actually asleep on the stage) is a familiar sight to Renaissance playgoers. Though the device of the stage sleep is often employed, there are two types of sleep that recur with some frequency. First, there is the curative sleep, the sleep that restores to order the mind and the soul. Second, there is the sleep that I shall call the sleep of sloth or of folly.29

Both sleeps are discernible in Midsummer Night's Dream: only the second type occurs in Titus. By tracing the sleep convention through various Elizabethan works, Kramer also shows that the fatigue illustrated by the Andronici brothers was an accepted convention for moral turpitude.30 Thus Shakespeare has created an antithesis for Andronican piety by using the actual models of piety.

29Ibid., pp. 182-183. 30Ibid.
Both the construction of the sequence and the juxtaposition of comic and tragic elements display an artistic virtuosity. In his clumsiness, Martius has fallen into the pit to land on top of the dead Bassianus. It is a moment of great delight for Aaron who hastens to "fetch the Emperor to find them here" (line 220).

Exit.

The exchange of dialogue between Martius and Quintus not only intensifies the horror of the situation but further portrays them as frightened and bumbling rustics. When Martius asks for help to get out of the hole, Quintus answers:

I am surprised with an uncouth fear;
A chilling sweat o'erruns my trembling joints;
My heart suspects more than mine eye can see.
(226-228)

Quintus creates a picture of someone frightened by the cemetery. He senses something dreadful about him.

Shakespeare then creates further tension by having his characters engage in a rather lengthy discussion on a description of the hole and a short eulogy to Bassianus. The dramaturgical purpose here is purely theatrical. Aaron will have had enough time to bring Saturninus to the pit, and the brothers should have had enough time to escape. Only when it is too late does Quintus try to help Martius out of the pit. He is not successful.

Falls in.

Enter the Emperor Saturninus and Aaron the Moor.

Again Shakespeare's timing is perfect. He has brought the
Emperor onto the scene just in time to see Quintus disappear into the pit. Moreover, Saturninus has apparently been kept ignorant of the facts by Aaron for he must ask who is in the pit. Aaron has apparently only provided the Emperor with some unstated cause to come with him to this spot. The Moor has played his role with extreme caution so that no blame, even of advance information, can be his. Upon discovering from the sons of Andronicus that Bassianus is in the pit, Saturninus replies that he had last seen Bassianus and Lavinia at the hunting lodge less than an hour earlier. Martius is constrained to correct the Emperor:

We know not where you left them all alive;
But, out, alas! here have we found him dead.

(272-273)

There seems to be a final black note of humor in Martius's words. He would quibble over such an unimportant thing as when Saturninus last saw Bassianus alive.

Enter Tamora, with Attendants; Titus Andronicus, and Lucius.

Tamora's delayed entrance provides her with an opportunity to make a fitting display of grief at the death of her brother-in-law, but only after delivering the "fatal-plotted scroll" (2, 47) entrusted to her by Aaron. It is all the proof that Saturninus will need to rid himself of the Andronici.

She giveth Saturninus a letter.

Sat. (Reads) "And if we miss to meet him handsomely. Sweet huntsman--Bassianus 'tis we mean--Do thou as much as dig the grave for him. Thou knowest our meaning. Look for thy reward Among the nettles of the elder tree
Which overshades the mouth of that same pit
Where we decreed to bury Bassianus.
Do this and purchase us thy lasting friends."
O Tamora! was ever heard the like?
This is the pit, and this the elder tree.
Look, sirs, if you can find the huntsman out
That should have murdered Bassianus here.

(285-296)

Aaron quickly obliges by producing the bag of gold he himself
had hidden among the nettles. It is proof enough and Saturninus
summarily orders the Andronici sons to prison to await future
punishment.

Tamora dissembles (line 306) when she asks: "What,
are they in this pit?" Titus sinks to his knees (line 307)
and begs for justice. He offers himself as bail but is refused.
The scene ends with one last ironic twist of the tongue.
It is suitably Tamora who consoles Titus with her promise
of assistance:

Andronicus, I will entreat the King.
Fear not thy sons; they shall do well enough.

(323-324)

Exeunt.
Scene IV. Another part of the forest.

Enter the Empress' sons, with Lavinia, her hands cut off, her tongue cut out, and ravished.

The stage directions introduce one of the most harshly criticized scenes in all of Shakespeare's works. Some critics have viewed the scene as overdone and in extremely bad taste; others have said that it is quite unplayable; and still others have dismissed it as being entirely unnecessary. The difficulties are as follows: the delivery of a forty-seven line description of a ravished young girl whose hands have been cut off and tongue cut out so that she cannot communicate to anyone the identity of her malefactors and the actual theatrical presentation of the same ravished girl. On the surface, the scene seems redundant, at the least.

If the scene is to be understood at all, consideration must be given to the important connections established between Shakespeare's theatre and the conventions of the tableaux vivants and the Chambers of Rhetoric. Viewed in that light, the difficulties in the scene seem less formidable; and an apparent contradiction will help to solve the problem. The tableaux and the chamber plays were dominated by two tendencies:

the desire to visualize—-to present realistic pictures to the eye--and the tendency to symbolic abstract thinking—-to present type characters that illustrate a theme. Both the realism and the allegory we find in Flemish art. From the beginnings of the fifteenth century Flemish painters had surpassed all others in the technique of painting realistic detail. Their heavenly beings were presented in local costume with the utmost realism of detail.
When they painted human beings, they not only kept the same realism and vividness but showed an increasing interest in classifying man by some abstract scheme and painting him from some satiric or allegorical point of view. The same can be said for Shakespeare's theatre, and in this case, *Titus Andronicus*. Thus a ravished Lavinia with bloody mouth and stumps certainly appeared, and should appear on the stage; however, the allegorical treatment of character within the entire act asks that the audience see not so much a wounded Lavinia but an actor portraying wounded virtue.

Additionally, by providing the psychic distance needed for viewing, Marcus's speech amplifies the cosmic nature of Lavinia's suffering beyond the momentary pain and horror. It seem certain that Shakespeare intended some symbolic or allegorical interpretation to this scene as in others, especially in Act II. The convention would seem to be established by the fact that he never gives wounds treatment or time to heal. They (the simulated wounds) make for marvelously theatrical excitement, but the play must go on. Actors exit and wipe off the blood in time for their next entrance. Audiences must wipe away the blood while they watch so that they can actually see to the heart of the matter. In that manner Lavinia is an actress with bloody props portraying the young Roman lady and at the same time the symbol of *pietas* inverted and injured. The actress then must move in a dumb show while the surrogate expositor-narrators take their turns at describing

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the tableau.

By working within the framework of the art conventions previously mentioned, Shakespeare has diffused the violence and horror of the scene. By presenting Lavinia as a moving pantomime or dumb show, he has created a narrative or dramatic incident within the silent convention of space art. However, the time limitation of space art is broken by the direct address of the narrators. Moreover, each of the forms is essentially non-dramatic: one is illustrative (Lavinia in pantomime) while the other is expository (Marcus's description). It is a happy resolution to the objections that Shakespeare violates the sensitivities of his art and his audience. That is an altogether different story.

By calling specific attention to her tongue, her hands, and her ravished sexuality, Demetrius and Chiron focus the horror away from the personage of Lavinia to her wounds themselves. The distinction is subtle but important. They remove attention even further from Lavinia with their jibes actually directed at themselves:

Chir. And 'twere my cause, I should go hang myself.
Dem. If thou hadst hands to help thee knit the cord.

(10-11)

Lavinia is forgotten for the moment and all attention is focused on the gross immorality of the brothers and the enormity of their crime. That is as it should be. Lavinia is actually dispensable for the purpose of resolving the struggle for pietic survival.

Exeunt Demetrius and Chiron.
Wind Horns. Enter Marcus from hunting.

Marcus sees Lavinia and either does not recognize her because of her mutilated condition or sees only a retreating figure:

Who is this? My niece, that flies away so fast!
Cousin, a word: where is your husband?

(112-113)

Only when she turns back to him does he realize the awful truth of her condition:

If I do dream, would all my wealth would wake me!
If I do wake, some planet strike me down,
That I may slumber an eternal sleep!

(114-116)

For a moment he is almost struck dumb. In repeating himself, he reveals a person searching for something to say. Even Marcus speaks in the tongue of the age of Saturninus. A planet has struck him down, and he ironically and unknowingly alludes to the possibility of a great and eternal sleep that threatens Rome herself. He next asks Lavinia to speak and tell him who has "lopped and hewed . . . her two branches"

(18-19). The word choice may be unfortunate, but Shakespeare has obviously chosen to show the usually garrulous Marcus at a loss for words. The device of catachresis again comes to play in the poetry.

The focus is now on Marcus and his emotional response to the horror and bloodshed. He continues to keep Lavinia at a distance from the audience as he piles analogy upon analogy and metaphor upon metaphor, none satisfying the needs of the moment except his own verbal ones. Talk he must; he is unable
to do more:

Alas, a crimson river of warm blood,
Like to a bubbling fountain stirred with wind,
Both rise and fall between thy rosed lips,
coming and going with thy honey breath.

(23-26)

He has discovered that she cannot speak, and he immediately compares her to a fountain. The image is perfect since the fountain was one of the most consistent stage devices of the tableaux for its variety of uses and symbols. Even more appropriate is the symbolism of the bleeding fountain, an image familiar on the stage as a symbol of the life-giving Christ. Shakespeare's symbolism works within the scene. The fountain of life for the Andronici, i.e., pietas, bleeds and prepares the soil for later growth. It must not be forgotten that Elizabeth I and other monarchs were compared to life-giving fountains in the festival decorations of the sixteenth century street-shows. In fact, the "two London fountains--the conduit in Cornhill and the Little Conduit in Cheapside--were made into special show-places, and their castle-like towers served as structures for characters and music." Thus when critics find fault with Marcus's comparison of Lavinia to a "conduit with three issuing spouts" (line 31), they have missed completely the significance of the phrase.

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32 Kernodle, From Art to Theatre, p. 125.
33 Ibid., p. 72.
Marcus becomes so involved in his own misery that he retreats into the mythological past. He searches for solace in the myth of Philomela but finds no comfort since Philomela lost only her tongue. Lavinia, unlike Philomela, will be unable even to tell her story in a "tedious sampler" (line 40). But Marcus is safe in the mythological past; there he has no need for either empathy or action.

Finally he approaches Lavinia and speaks to her as a person:

Come, let us go and make thy father blind
For such a sight will blind a father's eye.  
(53-54)

The recognition of Lavinia as one in need of comfort is delayed; the horror has been diluted by time and words and the stage is already prepared for new horrors. Marcus will take Lavinia to Titus, who he is sure, will cry for months. Already he has forgotten Lavinia's suffering and thinks rather of how Titus will react.

It is such an attitude that makes an audience realize man's cruelty even to those he loves, but Shakespeare redeems Marcus with the final line of Act II directed to Lavinia:

Oh, could our mourning ease thy misery!  
(line 55)

Exeunt.

Not only is the scene eminently playable but it is a masterstroke of playwriting. Its Ovidian overtones in subject matter and language give it elegance and grandeur. Its resemblance to the tableaux vivants give it structural and
theatrical integrity. Woven into the fabric of the play as it is, it truly helps to create an allegorical picture of *pietas* perverted. The play's antithesis is complete.
CHAPTER IV

TEARS IN THINGS

The Suffering of the Tragic Hero as a Result of Pietas

Act III explores primarily the suffering of a potentially tragic hero. In fact, the entire act might be considered a kind of Old Testament lamentation in which Titus suffers unknowingly for his acts of pietas. Of paramount importance in Act III is the process by which the virtue of pietas is hardened into an uncompromising and almost obsessive fixation. Thus by remaining firm in his commitment to pietas, despite almost unbearable suffering, Titus approaches the level of the Aristotelian tragic figure.

In Act III, Titus laments over four specific sources of his suffering: the mutilation of Lavinia, the loss of his hand, the deaths of Quintus and Martius, and the banishment of Lucius. Each will be shown to have been caused by his own willful acts of piety. Each has at this point in the play the potential to make Titus a tragic figure, but such is not to be the case. Titus is unable to recognize his own hardness of heart; hubris still rules.

Act III is essentially the study of a man caught in the midst of catastrophe. There is a theatrical brilliance about the act that provides actors and directors with
opportunities to present the nightmare of a Titan reduced to weeping and groveling in the streets of Rome. Analysis of the various scenes in the act will clearly indicate that Titus is not a revenge figure; rather, he is a martyr to a cause he does not yet comprehend. Thus the moral quality of Titus's suffering lacks definition for the time being. Recognition of the cause of his suffering will come later and bring with it meaning and value. During Act III Titus is made to suffer in a kind of purgatorial manner as part of a purification of soul necessary for future redemption.
Act III

Scene I. Rome. A street.

Enter the Judges and Senators with Titus' two sons bound, passing on the stage to the place of execution, and Titus going before, pleading.

The stage directions may seem curious at first, but an analysis of them shows that the playwright knew his stage well and the theatrical possibilities it offered him. Shakespeare has returned his characters to the streets of Rome for a series of lamentations that turn the entire scene into an extended supplication. Earlier Titus had knelt in the streets of Rome to eulogize her, victorious in mourning weeds; now he grovels in the dust asking for mercy and justice from that same Rome. The playwright thus continues the use of the convention of thesis-antithesis as a major motif in the play. The author's direction for the players to move across "the stage to the place of execution" serves two purposes: first, it is a reminder that what has happened and what is about to happen are theatrical events; and, second, it indicates that specific action on the part of the entire ensemble is required.

Just the day before, the same Martius and Quintus had led their own prisoners across the same stage to eventual freedom. The antithesis is once more established, even to Titus's pleading for mercy. A ritual has been established, and the staging possibilities should not be overlooked. The stage direction also suggests that as Titus pleads, he should walk in front of the line of march, reach in to his sons,
clutch at the garments of the stoical judges and senators, and finally stagger backward at the steady and unbroken pace of the marchers. He pleads throughout:

Hear me, grave fathers! Noble tribunes, stay!
For pity of mine age, whose youth was spent
In dangerous wars, whilst you securely slept;
For all my blood in Rome's great quarrel shed,
For all the frosty nights that I have watched,
And for these bitter tears, which now you see
Filling the aged wrinkles in my cheeks,
Be pitiful to my condemned sons,
Whose souls is not corrupted as 'tis thought.
For two and twenty sons I never wept,
Because they died in honor's lofty bed.

(1-11)

Titus's words must be examined closely for he will soon resort to a different style of language. Here he speaks as a Roman of the old day, of the Spartan days when pietic virtue and manly courage were the measure of a soul. He has been forced to remind Rome that, of all men, he was the most pietic; and, for the first time, he cries. He had never cried before at the honorable death of twenty-two other sons; he weeps here bitterly that the Andronici have come to such a state. He cannot accept the guilt of his sons, and he does not recognize his instrumentality in their predicament. Most striking about his speech is that Titus has to face the terrible truth that his pietas is not transferrable to others and that virtue is its own reward. His unwillingness to accept the guilt of his sons and his inability to help them through his own reservoir of virtue is intensified by a syntactical gesture by Shakespeare. In line nine ("Whose souls is not corrupted as 'tis thought.") the singular verb is out of
agreement with the plural subject. Rather than being grammatically incorrect, Titus has compounded the souls of his sons into a single unit. It is a stoical gesture that indicates an aspiration to pantheistic union with the divine. In a sense, Titus again reaches for the heights of Olympus. His goal is not achieved, for no one listens.

Andronicus lieth down and the Judges, etc. pass by him, and Exeunt.

Shakespeare now begins his study of the suffering here; but before the soul of Titus can be explored, several remarks must be made about the manipulation of stage time by the playwright. In a few minutes Titus will see the ravished Lavinia for the first time. Logically, he should have seen her before the sons were taken to their execution; dramatically, the stage chronology works better. However, the dramatic purposes of the play create an awkward situation. Roman justice has apparently worked very quickly. Saturninus had ordered the sons of Titus to prison to await some horrible torture, but they are already now on their way to execution. All of these things have happened almost too quickly; but since they were bound to happen eventually, Shakespeare again reduces the time frame according to the exigencies of the stage. As a result of such a compression of time, the action is intensified in order to give the events a greater theatricality; and realism has been dismissed by the demands of the dramaturgical structure.

By creating almost a parody of the opening scene of
the play in the first scene of Act III, Shakespeare has created a special atmosphere in which Titus suffers. To complete the antithesis to the first scene, Titus must suffer as greatly as he had previously triumphed. Thus he must be reduced to as low a state as his earlier state was high. There are obstacles to overcome to achieve the effect. Of its very nature, a triumph is a communal activity; suffering is a solitary and lonely experience. In order to achieve the desired theatrical effect, to lift Titus's sufferings to triumphal heights, the playwright must carefully construct his scenes so that one thing is absolutely clear: pietas, as symbolized by Titus, must suffer in as grand a manner as it has erred in earlier situations.

In Titus's opening speech of the third act, he uses the words tears and weep or variations thereof more than thirty times. Under other circumstances such redundancy would be without justification. Here, the effect is created that not even the gods could weep as much as the stoic hero who weeps for his sins and the sins of Rome. It is an important part of the character portrayal since it creates the feeling that Titus is both human and divine. He is truly a Titan in his suffering:

For these, Tribunes, in the dust I write
My heart's deep languor and my souls sad tears.
Let my ears staunch the earth's sad appetite;
My sons' sweet blood will make it shame and blush.
O earth, I will befriend thee more with rain,
That shall distill from these two ancient urns,
Than youthful April shall with all his show'rs.
In summer's drought I'll drop upon thee still;
In winter with warm tears I'll melt the snow
And keep eternal springtime on thy face,
So thou refuse to drink my sons' blood.

(12-22)

In his vow Titus assumes greater power than even the seasons. His pride bears him above even the gods who do not always have control over nature. There is a sense of cosmic bargaining in Titus's hubris; and he makes of himself the archetype of suffering in the same manner that he made of himself the archetype of pietas. Only later, when the two are merged into one by the recognition of the truth of his suffering, does Titus again become an agent for action in the play. For now, he cannot see or feel anything except rejection and shame.

The use of tears and/or weeping as a literary motif has a tradition in world literature; in fact there are a number of specific instances that help to support the validity of such a use in Titus. In the Old Testament the Books of Job and Jeremias offer tearful lamentations that have become exemplars of lyric and dramatic poetry. Most notable about those Biblical lamentations is the ambivalence of true suffering for some higher or future good and the misery of present pain. Plato also pursues the pleasure-pain paradox in the Phaedo, and he illustrates it with the example of the swan that laments with the most beautiful of songs only when it is about to

1The Holy Bible. See especially "Chapter 16" of the Book of Job, The Lamentations of Jeremias, and "Chapter 8" of the Book of Jeremias.
die. In the New Testament Christ asked that the chalice of redemption be lifted from him as he wept in the Garden on Mount Olivet; yet, there was implicit in his suffering the joy and glory of saving mankind from the forces of evil. Most important, in the Aeneid, Aeneas consoles his weeping followers at the loss of friends, loved-ones, and family; but he reminds them of their destiny to found a new Troy. He tells them that their suffering is a necessary part of their future glory since "there are tears in things." The theme permeates the entire epic; Titus establishes the same theme on his first entrance at the beginning of the play when he hails Rome in her mourning weeds. The motif is repeated in Act II on several occasions. Thus it is quite possible to accept the presentation of Titus's tears and suffering in Act III as completely within the province of the play.

Enter Lucius, with his weapon drawn.

Titus continues to speak; he has apparently not seen his young son enter. The image is especially stage worthy. Lucius has not yet been reduced to kneeling in the streets and begging for mercy. His aggressive posture suits the occasion well, especially in the light of future demands made upon him as Emperor. His attitude is also aggressive; he has no time for lamenting and he interrupts Titus to tell

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2 Plato, Phaedo, passim.

3 Virgil, Aeneid, Book 1.
him that no one is listening:

... you recount your sorrows to a stone.
(line 29)

Titus ignores him except for a brief comment and begins again to beseech the Tribunes. Lucius must tell him point blank that the Tribunes do not listen. Titus's response contains within it a sense of the inevitability of his suffering and eventual tragic end. His suffering makes him as unseeing as his pietas:

Why, 'tis no matter, man: if they did hear,
They would not mark me: if they did mark,
They would not pity me; yet plead I must,
And bootless unto them.

(33-36)

Titus recognizes his need to suffer, but he does not recognize the efficient causality of his pain. Besides, there is every indication in the lamentation that he somehow enjoys his new function in Rome. Then, when he begins to speak to the stones, the remainder of the speech trails off into poetic meanderings of a tired old man. For several moments Titus loses touch with the world around him. He seeks solace in the stones, which he finds as "soft as wax," (line 45) even softer than the Tribunes; there is a hint of potential madness in the protagonist. When he returns to the reality of the occasion, he asks Lucius why he is armed.

When Lucius tells him that he has been banished for attempting to rescue his condemned brothers, Titus calls him a "happy man" (line 52). Titus has indeed developed a fine sort of madness:
Since Titus cannot face the truth of the situation except through sarcasm and cynicism, he has not accepted Rome for what it has become. He has escaped into a fanciful world where reality is unwelcome and only poetry consoles. Even greater suffering will be needed to force him to see the truth of his plight. Shakespeare has brilliantly combined his elements to create a picture of blind justice's spokesman, injured pietas, tied to the stones of Rome by pride like an earlier Prometheus tied to Caucasus.

Enter Marcus with Lavinia.

In this meeting between father and daughter, Shakespeare takes the less theatrical but ultimately more dramatic approach. He avoids the histrionics of the Senecan or revenge tragedies and pushes his hero even further into a shell of stoical resignation. Since there is no need to shock the audience further with the brutalized Lavinia, Shakespeare maneuvers his material so that the focus remains on Titus. The expected thing is for Titus to cry out in anger. That will not be the case. Marcus formally presents Lavinia in almost a mockery of courtly elegance:

This was thy daughter.

(line 63)

Without skipping a beat, Titus finishes the line of iambic pentameter:
Why, Marcus, so she is.
(line 64)

In fact, Titus anticipates the beat of the poetry; he is ready, actually willing to accept Lavinia as his. The use of the present tense is his way of showing that the old Titus is no longer and that both he and Lavinia are participants in a new dispensation. With one word his suffering becomes exquisitely virtuous. With only a pause to demand that the horrified Lucius look at his sister, Titus launches into a new lamentation, bemoaning the passing of virtue, specifically pietas. He sarcastically speaks of pietas as being as redundant as an extra "fagot to bright-burning Troy" (line 70).

To interpret Titus's speech as anything but wounded pride rationalizing against pain is gratuitous. He has not suddenly thrown over an entire lifetime of commitment to the Roman ideal. He is too old for that. Nor has he instantly developed into a hateful avenger. No actor could read this speech without realizing that Titus is only trying to fool himself. Titus has simply followed the traditional masculine tradition of dissembling his grief in some sort of cavalier display. He also provides psychic distance from Lavinia's problem by sermonizing on the emptiness of public service:

Give me a sword; I'll chop off my hands, too;
For they have fought for Rome, and all in vain;
And they have nursed this woe in feeding life;
In bootless prayer have they been held up,
And they have served me to effectless use.
Now all the service I require of them
Is that the one will help to cut the other.
'Tis well, Lavinia, that thou hast no hands;
For hands to do Rome service is but vain.
(73-81)
There is small consolation for Lavinia in Titus's words; moreover, he has hinted at his own impending mutilation.

Titus's speech indicates that he believes he has suffered in spite of pietas rather than because of it. At this point in the play, an understanding of Titus's attitude is of great importance and it must be viewed in relation to the first two acts of the play. In Act I, Titus is seen as a personification of pietas in action: in Act II, Aaron, Tamora, Demetrius, and Chiron are seen as antithetical personifications of evil directly opposed to pietas. The actions of pietas in Act I were the direct causes of anti-pietic actions in Act II. Thus, thesis created antithesis, which, in turn created a new thesis in Act III. The sufferings endured to this point in Act III ultimately stem from the evil antithetical actions in Act II. In turn, the suffering allows the playwright to introduce a second antithesis to pietas in the doubts entertained by Titus concerning the efficacy of piety. Not only is this a logical step in character building, but it is necessary for the integrity of the plot to have the protagonist face the moral issue of his actions and judge them accordingly. In Titus, the judgment is withheld for the time being. By structuring the play in this manner, Shakespeare has followed the lead of Virgil in his construction of the Aeneid, which uses the thesis-antithesis structure to show both sides of Aeneas's problem.⁴ Just as Virgil

forces Aeneas to face the moral issues that complicated his world, so Shakespeare brings Titus face-to-face with the moral issues in Saturnalian Rome.

Finally Titus expresses a sense of suffering and alienation that was expected on his first sight of Lavinia. It has been almost too long in coming, but the poetry ranks with Shakespeare's best. Loaded with self-conscious alliteration and assonance, the speech reveals the greatness of a man in command of his destiny and conscious of the state to which his family has been reduced. It is poetic, dramatic, and narrative all in one. Titus lifts his own soul and suffering Rome to tragic heights in a most eloquent manner:

> For now I stand as one upon a rock,  
> Environed with a wilderness of sea,  
> Who marks the waxing tide grow wave by wave,  
> Expecting ever when some envious surge  
> Will in his brinish bowels swallow him.  
> This way to death my wretched sons are gone;  
> Here stands my other son, a banished man;  
> And here my brother, weeping at my woes.  
> (94-101)

It is as though Titus has stepped forward and calmly asked the audience for sympathy. There is no rancor or bitterness: It is the long-awaited voice of rational pietas recognizing itself for what it is: isolated virtue.

All too soon the discipline and control pass as Titus looks upon his ravished daughter; and, slowly but surely, he is reduced to mouthing images of polluted fountains, brine pits, and slimy meadows—reminders of the habitats of dragons, Cockow-pint plants, and, by extension, Aaron:
Shall thy good uncle and thy brother Lucius
And thou and I sit round about some fountain,
Looking all downward to behold our cheeks,
How they are stained, like meadows yet not dry
With miry slime left on them by a flood?
And in the fountain shall we gaze so long,
Till the fresh taste be taken from that clearness
And make a brine pit with our bitter tears?  

Titus is able to control his grief no longer. In a
ranting, screeching cry of impotency, he bares his suffering
soul to the world with a plea for some respite. He finds no
easy answer:

Or shall we cut away our hands like thine?
Or shall we bite our tongues and in dumb shows
Pass the remainder of our hateful days?
What shall we do? Let us that have tongues
Plot some device of further misery,
To make us wondered at in time to come.

(133-137)

In no way can this speech be construed as a declaration of
a revengeful war against his enemies. He does not even
recognize who they are. Moreover, Shakespeare has provided
clues in the ensuing dialogue to the interpretation of Titus's
words. Before Titus can continue his ranting, Lucius interrupts
to console his father. The young man's concern is only for
his tormented and grief-stricken father. He ignores the call
for revenge and performs an obligatory act of pietas:

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5The temptation is to speculate that Shakespeare may
also have been thinking of the symbolic convention that related
the British monarch to a life-giving fountain and was here
making a comment on the contemporary political situation.
Elizabeth I had no legitimate successor, and she had muddied
the waters of British politics to the point that many English
subjects were looking away from the Tudor family for a monarch.
It is a legitimate speculation but one that has little to do
with the scene at hand.
Sweet father, cease your tears; for at your grief
See how my wretched sister sobs and weeps.
(139-140)

Then Marcus consoles Lavinia and offers Titus a handkerchief to dry his eyes. The scene reaches the level of true familial pietas; no revenge lurks here. And Titus does not return to thoughts of plots of further misery for the time. His suggestion for retaliation, derived from anger and unchanneled grief, dies at its conception.

Enter Aaron the Moor, alone.

Aaron offers both Quintus and Martius to Titus in return for his hand as a token of ransom. The first grisly moment of the play nears; and, even at that, the true horror of the situation is not realized until after the fact. According to Aaron, the Emperor will accept Titus's hand as "the ransom for their fault" (line 152). Titus quickly acquiesces in one of the most sarcastic lines in the play:

O gracious Emperor! O gentle Aaron!
Did ever Raven sing so like a lark
That gives sweet tidings of the sun's uprise?
(160-162)

The legal subtlety of the bargain escapes him; he has unwittingly accepted the guilt of his sons. The only consideration for Titus is that he has still another opportunity to perform an act of civil and familial pietas. His eagerness to act reduces still further the horror since the loss of his hand is willful. The enormity of the loss is intensified only afterwards when Aaron reveals his trickery and returns the heads of Titus's executed sons.
Wisely, Shakespeare engages Lucius and Marcus in the bargain. Both the brother and the son would sacrifice a hand in the place of Titus. For Aaron, the success is diabolically sweet, especially since the whole affair has been fabricated by himself. It is also the first time that he has been actually involved in an act of violence.

The scene is truly pathetic as the three men, Titus, Marcus, and Lucius, argue over their suitability for sacrificing a hand. The stage is in chaos, again orchestrated by Aaron; and, not to be forgotten, Lavinia stands aside handless and mute. Then, in a display of wit and shrewdness, Titus tricks both his brother and son into leaving the stage for an axe with which to complete the job—on one or the other.

*Exeunt Lucius and Marcus.*

As soon as they leave, Titus offers his hand, asking for assistance from Aaron. The Moor's own trickery has ensnared him into participation of a cruel deed. It is an obligatory moment, for there must be some visible sign of Aaron's evil nature. In addition, Titus, suffering obvious physical pain in a most dramatic fashion, finally gains a visible sign of honor in losing his hand. The dramaturgy is economical.

*He [Aaron] cuts off Titus' hand.*

There is only silence. The genius of the playwright has wrought stage magic. Neither movement nor sound mars the moment. In no way can this action be avoided, and the playwright well understood his problem. Despite all the
horror to befall the Andronici family, none until this point has physically touched Titus. His suffering has been from within, expressible only in words. His pain has not been actual; it has been only vicarious. To allow the play to move onward, the playwright needed to give Titus some physical pain and an emblem as a reminder of his virtue. In doing so, Shakespeare recognized the problem of boredom; an audience will listen only so long to poetic and vicarious suffering. Now he has pushed Titus once more back into the arena of action. At first Titus's movement is slow and halt. He seems more cautious as though aware that he has more suffering yet to do; but at this moment, the play moves toward new levels of action.

Shakespeare was also aware of the historical significance of Titus's sacrifice. The legal practice of the ordeal as proof of innocence was a common practice in the late Roman Empire as part of the Gothic influence. The practice survived as a commonplace thing into the fourteenth century. The sacrificing of the hand was one of the standard ordeals, and silence in the moment of sacrifice was often considered to be proof of innocence. The practice was actually not declared illegal in England until the nineteenth century.6 There is no doubt that this was one of the most exciting scenes in the

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6Information concerning the ordeal was obtained from standard encyclopedias and from Black's Law Dictionary, s. v. "ordeal."
play for an Elizabethan audience.

Enter Lucius and Marcus again.

Titus speaks in typically pietic tones. He offers the hand to Aaron to present to the Emperor as an act of fealty. He requests only that it be given a decent burial. Aaron prepares to leave with a promise that Titus will soon have his sons with him. What follows immediately thereafter contains within it the implied stage direction that everyone on the stage has rushed to Titus's side, thus leaving Aaron alone to sneer an aside in one of the most cynical moments in the play:

[Aside.] Their heads, I mean. Oh how this villainy Doth fat me with the very thought of it! Let fools do good and fair men call for grace, Aaron will have his soul black like his face. (209-212)

Exit.

Rarely has the theatre permitted evil so consummate to rejoice in itself in such an infectious manner. At this moment, Shakespeare comes close to shifting the focus away from the real heart of the scene; but he carefully returns the audience to Titus with one word, Titus's next: "oh, . . . ." Only by forcing a sob of excruciating pain from Titus's bowels can the playwright maintain the integrity and true horror of the scene. It is not the time for laughter at Aaron, for it is the moment in which pietas undergoes its hardening process.

In this sequence, as in others, realism must take a back seat to the histrionics of both Aaron and Titus. Titus's entire speech following his cry seems a kind of wolf-like
howl, and Marcus finally has to tell him to control himself and not to "break into these deep extremities" (line 224). Again Shakespeare is consistent in his portrayal of Titus; for just as pietas and suffering have been characterized as without human limits, so Titus's "passions" should be "bottomless with them" (line 226).

Marcus begs Titus to let reason govern his lament, but he is unsuccessful. Titus's lamentation is more Biblical in tone than ever:

If there were reasons for these miseries,  
Then into limits could I bind my woes,  
When heaven doth weep, doth not the earth o'erflow?  
If the winds rage, doth not the sea wax mad,  
Threat'ning the welkin with his big-swoln face?  
And wilt thou have a reason for this coil?  
I am the sea: hark, how her sighs doth blow!  
She is the weeping welkin, I the earth.  
Then must my seas be moved with her sighs;  
Then must my earth with her continual tears  
Become a deluge, overflowed and drowned.  

(228-238)

Titus still does not know why he suffers, only that he must—and he accepts. His attitude is that of the Christian ascetic or the Stoic. He must go through the process from which virtue rises purified. His attitude is also consistent; for even at the beginning of the play, he had reminded Rome that his pietas was lacking. Now he will undergo the ascetical suffering necessary to develop strong and unselfish virtue. Titus continues the guest for disinterested Roman pietas.

The poetry is savage in its description of the shrieking and raging winds of the sea, and the play takes on a primordial quality with the poetic emphasis placed on the
unharnessed elements of nature. Titus has joined his soul with nature and the metaphoric metamorphosis of Titus into virtue itself begins. Earlier Titus had seen himself as standing upon a rock threatened by the wilderness of the sea; now he has become the sea.

Titus makes a final call for self-abnegation and commitment to purpose:

Forwhy my bowels cannot hide my woes,  
But like a drunkard must I vomit them.  
Then give me leave, for losers will have leave  
To ease their stomachs with their bitter tongues.

(239-242)

The purgatorial allusion indicates that Titus has only begun the pursuit of virtue.

Enter a Messenger, with two heads and a hand.

He speaks:

Worthy Andronicus, ill art thou repaid  
For that good hand thou senst the Emperor.  
Here are the heads of thy two noble sons;  
And here's thy hand in scorn to thee sent back:  
Thy grief their sports, thy resolution mocked;  
That woe is me to think upon thy woes,  
More than remembrance of my father's death.

(243-249)

Aaron's duplicity is fully revealed, and delayed horror sweeps over the stage. Chaos reigns again as disbelief, desperation, and doubt commingle in the ruin of Andronican hopes. The stage direction and the words of the messenger would appear to be redundant, but their purpose can be easily explained. The messenger should hardly be carrying the gruesome items exposed in his hands; their visibility would overstate his entrance and dilute an effective macabre moment
later in the scene. A good large straw basket would serve well as a receptacle for the gory items; and while Marcus and Lucius stagger aimlessly about the stage trying to find some consolation for their woes, Titus can merely stare trance-like into the basket. It is another dumb show terminated by the messenger's exit.

Then in characteristic fashion, Marcus overstates his zealouslyness and willingness to retaliate. As a man of compromise rather than action, Marcus is not to be believed:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Now let hot Etna cool in Sicily} \\
\text{And be my heart an ever-burning hell!} \\
\text{To weep with them that weep doth ease some deal,} \\
\text{But sorrow flouted at is double death.} \\
\end{align*}
\]

The possibility that Marcus's heart will become an "ever-burning hell" is as remote as Mount Etna cooling; the speech is a set-chewer. On the other hand, Lucius speaks quietly and metaphysically. There is a trace of Hamlet in his words:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Ah, that this sight should make so deep a wound} \\
\text{And yet detested life not shrink thereat!} \\
\text{That ever death should let life bear his name,} \\
\text{Where life hath no more interest but to breathe!} \\
\end{align*}
\]

Shakespeare has chosen the correct time to sketch into the play a different and more thoughtful aspect of Lucius's personality. The intensity of the moment and the depth of thought serve as dramatic means for establishing Lucius as a fitting heir to the throne.

The mute Lavinia finally breaks the mood with a pietic gesture.

\textit{Lavinia kisses Titus.}
Titus apparently does not respond because in the following line of dialogue Marcus has to comfort the distraught Lavinia:

> Alas, poor heart, that kiss is comfortless
> As frozen water to a starved snake.
> (260-261)

Titus continues to kneel over the basket containing the relics of his family's strength. He whispers:

> When will this fearful slumber have an end?
> (line 226)

This is the climactic moment in the play. His quiet moan brings together all the elements of the play and foreshadows the future. The Andronici fortunes have reached their lowest ebb and now begins their inexorable movement toward a tragic collision. For the present, pietas can only murmur and grovel in the streets of Rome. Ultimately a hardened pietas will lead Rome out of the wilderness of tigers.

Marcus can control himself no longer. He calls upon Titus to show some greater sign of grief than a simple rhetorical question. He vows not to play the role of the stoic, and he bids Titus to join him in railing at the heavens:

> Rent off thy silver hair, thy other hand
> Gnawing with thy teeth, and be this dismal sight
> The closing-up of our most wretched eyes.
> Now is the time to storm. Why art thou still?
> (270-273)

Titus laughs. The stage freezes in the satanic madness of unrestrained laughter. Titus has no more tears, only the cold unreason of laughter. The heated sorrow of Marcus is antithetical to the cold laughter of Titus. Titus brushes away tears and sorrow as impediments to his vision of the
truth. He must see clearly what to do:

Besides, this sorrow is an enemy
And would usurp upon my wat'ry eyes
And make them blind with tributary tears.
(277-279)

In Titus's next speech is a key to his motivation for the remainder of the play. Careful analysis can show that Titus seeks "Revenge's cave" (line 280) merely as a rhetorical tool for satisfying a religious obligation to his family and to Rome. He says:

Then which way shall I find Revenge's cave?
(line 280)

He does not even know where it is. He must ask for help from a person (Marcus) who is even less able than himself. The question is truly rhetorical and meaningless at this point. He has asked it as a matter of form in order to lift the family spirit and to make some pretense at setting things right. He needs time yet; he has only just sublimated his sorrows. He does not know what to do, and Revenge's cave is a rhetorical stop-gap measure to satisfy the fury of the moment. He himself is cool and self-possessed once more.

A new kind of Titus speaks now: a transformation has taken place through the effects of violence. Pietas still functions, but in a more shrewd and clever manner. Titus will respond to his enemies in the manner of form of revenge, but never the substance. His speech to the heads of his dead sons reveals a cunning awareness of the high-strung emotions of the present situation; and for a moment, Marcus and Lucius are tricked into thinking that Titus is bent on revenge.
They are unaware that he has learned a little of the ambiguous rhetoric of the politician"

For these two heads do seem to speak to me
And threaten me. I shall never come to bliss
Till all these mischiefs be returned again
Even in their throats that hath committed thm.
(281-284)

Titus has actually made no specific promise to anyone. He simply informs all present that he "shall never come to bliss" until justice is done. Neither the type of justice nor its manner of execution is determined by Titus.

Then in the next line Titus says: "let us see what task I have to do." It is the macabre but pietic task of burying the severed hand and the heads of his sons, ritually preceded by a solemn vow to right their wrongs. Words bereft of action could not express the drama, the ritual solemnity, and the theatricality of the next few minutes. The play again returns to the primary burial ritual with which it began. Moreover the ensuing ceremony is necessary for the preservation of the pietic motif despite weak stomachs or the scrupulous aesthetics of viewers. Titus gives his orders:

Come, brother, take a head;
And in this hand the other will I bear.
And Lavinia, thou shalt be employed:
Bear thou my hand, sweet wench, between thy teeth.
As for thee, boy, go get thee from my sight:
Thou art an exile, and thou must not stay.
Hie to the Goths and raise an army there.
And, if ye love me, as I think you do,
Let's kiss and part, for we have much to do.
(289-297)

The Andronici leave the stage as they entered, whole, intact, united in a common cause to preserve the best of
self and nation. An almost fanatic joy of commitment to duty radiates from the stage as the funeral procession makes its way to the tomb.

Exeunt. Manet Lucius.

Just as Aaron remained on stage at the end of the first act, so Lucius remains here. The structural parallel illustrates the Shakespearean touch, and other parallels come to mind. Saturninus exited in a triumphal procession to head a new Rome; Titus exits in chastised glory to save Rome. At the end of the first act, Rome was shrouded in the darkness of a Saturnalian age and was impeded by the blindness of pietic duty; here Titus finally vows to find the truth in order to lead Rome out of the darkness. The first act ends with the symbol of darkness and the real head of Rome left on the stage; here in Act III, Lucius, the symbol of light and the future head of the Roman state, awkwardly takes his deserved place. Lucius vows his pietic duty to his family and to Rome. He promises to requite their wrongs and to "be revenged on Rome and Saturnine" (line 310). At the beginning of Act II, Aaron had made a similar vow. Once again thesis and antithesis unite structurally and dramatically; however, by the use of the passive form of the word revenge, Shakespeare has made Lucius's revenge seem paradoxically noble and virtuous.

Exit.
Scene II. A room in Titus' house. A banquet set out.

Enter Titus Andronicus, Marcus, Lavinia, and the boy Lucius.

Until recently critics generally denied that Shakespeare wrote this scene, however, most editors currently agree that the internal evidence indicates Shakespearean authorship. The scene serves as a kind of epilogue to the previous scene and, at the same time, provides an important theatrical element to the play. It concludes an exploration of suffering as the potential cause of madness, and it gives the actor playing Titus an opportunity to play another mad scene. Together, these elements actually create a scene that serves as a prologue to the rest of the play by foreshadowing the masquerade and banquet at the end of the play.

When the scene opens, Titus proceeds to vent anger and rage because of his mutilated condition and that of Lavinia. He also cautions those gathered not to blunt their revenge with too much nourishment. Titus speaks as if he has prepared himself for action by nourishing his anger on Lavinia's plight. In especially bitter tones, he verbally flagellates his audience while he actually addresses Lavinia:

Thou map of woe, that thus doth talk in signs!
When thy poor heart doth beat with outraged beating,
Thou canst not strike it thus to make it still.
Wound it with sighing, girl, kill it with groans;
Or get some little knife between thy teeth
And against thy heart make thou a hole,
That all the tears that thy poor eyes let fall
May run into that sink and, soaking in,
Drown the lamenting fool in sea-salt tears.
(13-21)
When Marcus rebukes Titus for his stinging words, the old general continues with even greater ranting. He compares himself to Aeneas and in the process delivers an overlong treatise on the loss of hands. Then he hand-feeds Lavinia, all the while lamenting her reduced state. It is unlike Titus to behave in such a manner. His suffering seems pusillanimous; and even his young grandson Lucius attempts to call him away from such pathetic self-indulgence:

Good grandsire, leave these bitter deep laments. Make my aunt merry with some pleasing tale.

(48-49)

In the brief exchange a third generation of pietic Andronici has been introduced, and thereby Titus's suffering has been dramatically justified.

Abruptly the scene change its rhythm and focus.

Marcus strikes his dish with a knife.

When Titus discovers that Marcus has killed a fly, he explodes into a tirade unmatched by anything else in the entire play. It is as if the previous violence had been nothing more than a charade. Titus has never before spoken like this:

Out on thee, murderer! Thou killst my heart. Mine eyes are cloyed with view of tyranny. A deed of death done on the innocent Becomes not Titus's brother. Get thee gone: I see thou art not for my company.

(57-61)

The question must be asked: is Titus playing a game? It is difficult to believe that he has taken the death of a fly seriously. More than likely, Titus has seized an opportunity
to assume the mask of madness as a refuge of innocence. He realizes that a masquerade of insanity can be the most suitable device to excuse him from legal responsibility for many things that he must do in order to restore justice to Rome. Feigned madness is the simplest means available to protect himself from his enemies. More than once Shakespeare used feigned madness as a dramatic device in preserving the safety of a protagonist whose moral idealism was misunderstood or suspect. Such a use appears to be the intent of the playwright in Titus.

The audience cannot be expected to take seriously the rage of Titus at Marcus's killing of the fly. Even less can it be expected to accept as serious Titus's mutilation of the dead fly. The entire sequence is nothing more than a parody of things that have happened and a foreshadowing of things to come. It is Titus's most terrible and violent action in the play--wanton mutilation of a fly as the symbol of Aaron:

Give me the knife, I will insult on him,  
Flattering myself as if it were the Moor  
Come hither purposely to poison me.  
There's for thyself, and that's for Tamora.  
(76-79)

Titus further compounds the false horror with snide and secretive lines reminiscent of the absent Aaron:

Ah, sirrah!  
I think, we are not brought so low  
But that between us we can kill a fly  
That comes in likeness of a coal-black Moor.  
(80-83)

The lines demand a delivery accompanied by the sinister and sarcastic laughter associated with the devil and Aaron. The language and implied stage directions indicate that Titus is
truly play-acting. Marcus reacts in horror, that his family has no stomach for revenge, and he despairs of Titus's madness:

Alas, poor man! grief has so wrought on him,
He takes false shadows for true substances.
(84-85)

Titus has succeeded in deceiving his own family, and he has proven that he must act alone with no man as his counsel. Not only does the text of the play not contradict the thesis just presented, it seems to support it.

After Marcus has finished his aside to the audience, Titus collects himself calmly and exits with his mute daughter and loving grandson to read in the study sad stories from the days of old. It is a charming picture of familial pietas, and Titus stoically retreats into the past for inspiration. There is a slight glimmer of hope that the answer lies in the future in the person of the young Lucius:

Come, boy, and go with me. Thy sight is young,
And thou shalt read when mine begin to dazzle.
(89-90)

Act III ends on a positive note. Titus has suffered and survived as a stronger and wiser man who has not abandoned his ideals. Recognition is yet to come.

Exeunt.

In Act III, Shakespeare leads Titus through a catalogue of physical, emotional, and spiritual pain to a point of desolation. To his credit, Titus does not submit; rather, he emerges with a sense of tranquility as illustrated by the concluding movements of the act. Although Titus himself never really understands why he suffers, there can be no doubt that
he suffers as a result of the pietic acts that he committed early in the play. For the time being he must suffer without consolation.

Any one of Titus's sufferings has the potential of making him a tragic figure. Ultimately, the question must be asked whether or not Titus's sufferings lift him to tragic heights, place him within the narrow range of the revenge hero, or reduce him to the bathos of melodramatic madness. The answers have been implicitly given in the exegesis of the text; however, the suffering pietic Titus must be viewed through the eyes of other dramatic traditions.

Titus resembles the revenge hero in that he bases his actions on a sense of duty, but the revenge hero does not act until some vile deed sets him in motion. In Titus, the reverse is true. Moreover, the revenge hero suffers through no fault of his own; Titus is clearly responsible for his own suffering. Normally the revenge hero is never in any personal danger himself; Titus and his entire family stand unprotected against all types of physical dangers. He even suffers the loss of his hand. Finally, quite unlike the traditionally patient revenge hero, Titus is a man of action. He does not simply endure: in fact, there is a kind of pride or hubris in his suffering. Titus refuses to be either an automaton maneuvered by pain or simply a symbol of simplistic righteous-

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ness. In his appeal to heaven for help, he indicates a willingness to act and to take the high road in so doing:

Oh, here I lift this one hand up to Heaven,
And bow this feeble ruin to the earth.
If any power pities wretched tears,
To that I call.

(1. 213-216)

Titus also realizes the value of suffering. In Act III he shouts to the world the glory and nobility of suffering bravely. He cries in pain, and for a while he is human. Then his suffering becomes stoical and he makes a contest out of it. He welcomes the opportunity to test his endurance with suffering.

Will it consume me? Let me see it then?

(1. 62)

Aristotle has written that the function of tragedy is to produce fear and pity. Without attempting to resolve the many problems involved in Aristotle's dialectics, several assumptions must be made. It must first be assumed that suffering beyond the deserts of the one suffering is a necessary factor for producing fear and pity, and that the suffering indicates a fall from a lofty position. In addition, the fall must have resulted from some error in judgment on the part of the sufferer. Such an error in judgment is made manifest by a conscious, intentional, but not morally culpable act. Titus makes just such an error in judgment in his choice of Saturninus as Emperor. Thus his suffering is deserved, though excessive,

8Aristotle, Poetics, passim.
and Titus approaches the level of tragic heroism. John Vyvyan has made an important contribution to Titus scholarship in his discussion of this same point. He concluded:

Titus simply commits an Aristotelean 'error', from which calamity follows out of all proportion to the fault. This illuminates the contrast between the Aristotelean and the Shakespearean pattern. Behind the Aristotelean error, which precipitates tragedy, lies chance or fate; the yielding to temptation, whence a Shakespearean tragedy flows, is a moral decision.9

It is in regard to the moral decisions that Titus has made and will make later that critical questions concerning tragic stature arise.

In Shakespeare's tragedies, decisions are made that reflect the hero's mastery of his own destiny. Vyvyan comments that

... it is a principle with Shakespeare that the spirit is superior to fate. The fault is not in our stars, but in ourselves. Like Oedipus, Shakespeare's heroes come to a cross-roads; but if they kill their fathers there, they know what they're about; they soliloquize over it; and the audience understands why they afterwards tread the path to dusty death.10

Titus has been at fault; his adherence to pietic action and duty is too severe, especially in his sacrificing of Alarabas, his killing of Mutius, and his temporary rejection of Lucius. Titus does sin, and it is observable to all except him. Further, his suffering is beyond what he deserves. Perhaps

10Ibid.
his pietic obsession is so strong that only excessive suffering will penetrate to his heart. Nonetheless, Titus will be given the opportunity by Shakespeare to perform acts of creative mercy that will destroy his life but save his soul.

Thus *Titus Andronicus* operates from a dual causation: tragic error and morally wrong decisions. It is a beauty of the play that both are appropriately resolved by the end of the fifth act. For the present Titus suffers as a moral idealist unable to see the error of his ways. In that regard he is only partially a tragic figure, but his sufferings and noble endurance certainly have the power to arouse fear, pity, and admiration. *Titus Andronicus* thus corresponds partially to Edith Hamilton's notion of tragedy as a play that gives pleasure by showing us pain:

Pity, awe, reconciliation, exaltation--there are the elements that make up tragic pleasure. No play is a tragedy that does not call them forth.11

As yet, reconciliation is not complete in the play; and exaltation has not yet been achieved.

CHAPTER V

THE HARROWING OF HELL

The Recognition of Pietas as the Cause of both Personal Suffering and Political Crisis

In Act III Titus suffered greatly for his 'sin' of pietas; and, despite his inability to understand the cause of suffering, he remained steadfast and rose above the anguish to a new level of virtue. In Act IV he allows this recently tested virtue to influence his actions, and the plot of the play moves forward rapidly. In all four scenes of the act, the major characters all come to some kind of recognition of the power of Titus's virtue in the creation and possible resolution of the political situation in Rome. From that recognition comes fear of Titus and his family. In Titus's case, the recognition of his moral responsibility leads him to a determination to save Rome. In the presentation of the multiple recognitions occurring in Titus, Shakespeare has created a most interesting and complex plot structure: each of the combatants proceeds to act in such a manner that the plot reverses itself rapidly and theatrically.

In Act III Titus was metaphorically forced to suffer in his own personal hell; in Act IV he theatrically descends into the burning lake of Acheron in search of the
personification of Justice much as Aeneas entered the Under-world in search of divine guidance. Here the elements of the morality play merge into elements of the Virgilian myth to form one of the most dramatic and exciting segments of the play. In Act IV Titus also realizes that only consummate good can destroy consummate evil; he engages the enemy in battle; and Evil as personified by Aaron retreats from Rome. Furthermore, as Titus becomes increasingly aware of his need to save Rome, his conviction to act with pietas becomes more uncompromising than ever. By the end of the act, he truly embodies pietas; his enemies have begun to break apart in confusion; and he has yet to perpetrate the first act of revenge.
Scene I. Rome. Titus' garden.

Enter Lucius' son and Lavinia running after him, and the Boy flies her, with his books under his arm. Enter Titus and Marcus.

The opening action of Lavinia chasing her nephew provides the playwright with an opportunity to put pietic words into the mouth of the young Lucius:

> Although, my lord, I know my noble aunt Loves me as dear as e'er my mother did, And would not, but in fury, fright my youth: Which made me down to throw my books and fly, Causeless perhaps.

(23-27)

Surely a fitting descendant of the Andronici line, young Lucius displays love and piety toward his aunt Lavinia and compares her to two legendary mothers: Hecuba of Troy and Cornelia of Rome, mother of the Gracchi twins. Under normal circumstances a speech of this sort in the mouth of a child has a maudlin effect; here the reverse is true. Young Lucius concludes his speech with an apology to Lavinia; he is sorry for having been frightened of her:

> But pardon me, sweet aunt. And, madam, if my uncle Marcus go, I will most willingly attend your Ladyship.

(27-29)

His promise of attendance upon Lavinia springs from dutiful pietas. The motif of familial obligation remains dominant in the play.
Lavinia turns over with her stumps the books which Lucius has let fall.

In the scramble over the books, Titus prays that Heaven will reveal the "damned contriver of this deed" (line 38), a reference to Lavinia's mutilated condition. Marcus affirms that her lifting of arms in sequence (line 38) indicates more than one aggressor; and then, as if the playwright needed to reaffirm the Andronici state of mind, he has Marcus say:

Ay, more there was;
Or else to Heaven she heaves them for Revenge.

(41-42)

Clearly the Andronici have united themselves to Heaven as a source of justice in their cause. This is not a new posture for Titus and his family, and it is here of great importance to recall earlier demonstrations of their dependence on the gods and fate. In Act I, Titus refused to defend himself against Saturninus's anger and threw himself upon the mercy of the heavens when he said:

Rome and the righteous heavens be my judge,
How I have loved and honored Saturnine!

(427-428)

Later, after his hand has been amputated by Aaron, Titus again calls upon the heavens for aid:

O, here I lift this one hand up to heaven,
And bow this feeble ruin to the earth.
If any power pities wretched tears,
To that I call!

(206-209)

Still later, the Andronici will continue to ally themselves with the heavens. Unbeknown to Titus and his family at this time is the fact that the greatest forces on their side are
the will of the gods and the workings of fate. As time will prove, much of the undoing of the opposition has little to do with any particular action of Titus as an effective cause: rather, each of the contestants in the struggle will be greatly responsible for his own success or failure.

Then, as Lavinia turns over the leaves of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Titus and Marcus realize that she has finally found a way to speak to them. The dialogue is filled with references to the legendary Philomel, who was raped by Tereus in the woods. Titus sees a faint shadow of the truth:

> Ay, such a place there is where we did hunt—
> Oh, had we never, never hunted there!
> Patterned by that the poet here describes,
> By nature made for murders and for rapes.  
> (60-63)

He recognizes the fact that Lavinia would have never suffered as she has if they had not hunted in the woods. He does not yet realize that it was his act of *pietas* that put them there in the first place.

Marcus then makes an important comment on the essential relationship between the gods and the proceedings:

> Oh, why should nature build so foul a den,
> Unless the gods delight in tragedies?  
> (64-65)

He seems to be saying that, despite any human activity, the tragic events in which they are ensnared are permitted because of the whim of the gods. Then, with another prayer, this time to Apollo, Pallas Athena, Jupiter and Mercury, he asks for a solution to the mystery of Lavinia's movements. The prayer to
Apollo has special significance in Roman history and literature. Apollo was revered as patron of wisdom, virginal independence, and womanly arts. In addition, Apollo was supposed to have had special powers of prophecy and medicine. Most important of all, however, he approved the codes of law that included high moral and religious principles. In the search for truth, the Romans prayed to Apollo or his oracle, the Cumaean Sibyl. It was that same oracle to whom Aeneas prayed before his descent to the Underworld; and it was the Sibyl who led him on his journey. His prayer is answered:

He writes his name with his staff, and guides it with feet and mouth.

Then he encourages Lavinia to do the same:

Write thou, good niece, and here display at last
What God will have discovered for revenge
Heaven guide thy pen to print thy sorrows plain,
That we may know the traitors and the truth!
(80-83)

The heavens are again implored for aid.

She takes the staff in her mouth, and guides it with her stumps, and writes.

"Stuprum--Chiron--Demetrius."
(line 85)

Upon his realization of the truth, Titus is moved to quote from Seneca's Hippolyta. He again indicates his faith in the Gods resolving the problem:

1Stuprum: rape.
Magni Dominator poli,
Tam lentus audis scelera?  tam lentus vides?\(^2\)

An analysis of the remaining dialogue in the scene will reveal its critical importance to a proper understanding of the play as a whole. Marcus wishes to swear an immediate oath to prosecute the villains, Demetrius and Chiron, by mortal revenge. It is his bravest speech:

My lord, kneel down with me; Lavinia kneel;
And kneel, sweet boy, the Roman Hector's hope;
And swear with me, as, with the woeful fere
And father of that chaste dishonored dame,
Lord Junius Brutus sware for Lucretia's rape,
That we will prosecute by good advice
Mortal revenge upon these traitorous Goths
And see their blood, or die with this reproach.
   (94-101)

Marcus joins the Andronici to the traditional Trojans and Romans in his call for revenge, and again the Andronici kneel in a supplicatory ritual. Titus then warns Marcus to beware of the enemy especially because he really is not prepared by temperament or experience for revengeful actions:

You are a young huntsman, Marcus, let alone;
   (line 108)

Titus prefers a more cautious game; he has learned how the opposition behaves.

There is a touch of Hamlet in Titus's refusal to act too quickly or in the same manner as his opponents. He has other plans, which, apparently, have not been completely formulated. At any rate, Titus characteristically does not

\(^2\)"Oh, Lord of the great sky, how can you so calmly hear such crimes and watch unmoved?"
reveal for the moment the details of his play. For the time being, he will simply record in steel the information about Lavinia's plight:

And come, I will go get a leaf of brass
And with a gad of steel will write these words
And lay it by. The angry northern wind
Will blow these sands, like Sibyl's leaves, abroad,
And where'e our lesson then?
(109-113)

The allusion to the Sibyl again draws Titus close to the Aeneid. When Aeneas was about to enter the Underworld, he asked the Sibyl not to write her prophecies on leaves for fear of the wind blowing them away. Titus knows that since the future of Rome is again at stake, he must preserve proof of the truth just as Aeneas did; and Titus, like Aeneas, serves as an instrument of the gods.

Titus now engages his plan; he will send presents to Demetrius and Chiron through his own grandson Lucius:

Come, go with me into mine armory.
Lucius, I'll fit thee, and withal, my boy
Shall carry from me to the Empress' sons
Presents that I intend to send them both.
(120-123)

The plan is unclear; and, as a result, Lucius indicates that he wishes to plunge his own dagger "in their bosoms" (line 125). Titus pacifies the young man with the promise of "another course" (line 126). The entire action is shrouded in ambiguity, but the character of Titus remains consistent in his refusal to share his innermost thoughts. Furthermore, the promise of a course other than daggers in bosoms reveals a Titus not unlike the one who sacrificed Alarbus ad manes fratr um. Titus's
armory is not just stocked with weapons of revenge; he has a personal armory stocked with virtue and buttressed with a confidence in the gods. Once again a hint of pride and arrogance inform his words as he declares his determination to "go brave it at the court" and be "waited on" (lines 128-129).

Exeunt Titus, Lavinia, and young Lucius.

Titus's plan must seem extremely curious to Marcus, who remains alone on the stage speaking to himself. His first words call upon the Heavens for compassion for Titus. He then reveals a suspicion that Titus is not sane:

    Marcus, attend him in his ecstasy,
    That hath more scars of sorrow in his heart
    Than foemen's marks upon his battered shield,
    But yet so just that he will not revenge.
    Revenge the Heavens for old Andronicus!
(132-136)

It is obvious that Marcus has not seen through Titus's plan. Only future events will reveal what Titus's "ecstasy" really is. Marcus's final call to the Heavens for revenge underscores a most important point: Titus has yet to perform the first act of revenge; in fact, he has indicated by his words to young Lucius that he has no stomach for it. He deals in higher stakes.

From the opening scene of Act IV, several factors have emerged. The analogy between Titus and the Aeneid has been consistently maintained. It is hardly a dramatic accident that Titus should gain a knowledge of the truth of Lavinia's rape, hence, the truth of the state of Rome, through prayer
to Apollo. Nor can the reference to the leaves of the Sibyl be purely coincidental. The presentation of Titus as the doting grandfather who will raise his grandson in the traditions of his "armory" is nothing more than a reaffirmation on the part of the playwright and Titus that pietas still survives in Rome. Titus's closing lines indicate even more a determination to pursue the path of virtue. He has not yet made a visit of pietic obeisance to the court; it is his duty. He will "revenge" himself with a dutiful presentation of gifts. It is the same kind of behavior that caused his earlier suffering, and it comes after a recognition of the court's involvement in Lavinia's rape. His plan will be to present himself at court as the model of pietas itself. It is a cunning plan and one that shows Titus's control over his passions and a very obvious moral decision not to engage in revengeful actions. Moreover, he will go to the court and present himself in the guise of pietas. The masquerade has begun.

Exit.
Scene II. Rome. A room in the palace.

Enter Aaron, Chiron, and Demetrius at one door; and at the other door young Lucius and another with a bundle of weapons and verses writ upon them.

The emblematic staging indicated by the stage directions recalls the beginning sequence of the play with contestants at opposing doorways vying for control of the Empire. The struggle now involves the survival of the Roman culture. The key to the scene rests in the interpretation given to the personage intended by the word "another" in the stage direction. If the person is interpreted to be Titus in some sort of disguise, it would resolve the problem of fulfilling his promise to go to court and be waited on. It must be remembered that Titus had said earlier: "Lucius and I'll go brave it at court" (4. 1. 128). There is no other time in the play that young Lucius appears at court; and no other scene in the play presents Titus with the same opportunity as Act IV, scene 2. There are other considerations that support the identity of Titus as the "another." Titus would hardly have allowed the young boy alone at the court with Demetrius and Chiron especially now that he knows of their crimes. Titus's appearance at court in this scene also suits the allegorical and structural motifs that have clearly been established as special elements of the play.

One of the structural motifs is the pairing of actions in a thesis-antithesis relationship. The appearance of Titus disguised as Pietas is later balanced structurally
by the appearance of Tamora as Revenge at the home of the Andronici. To satisfy the allegorical conventions within the play, Titus should appear in this scene for the purpose of presenting the opposing forces of good and evil on the stage at the same time. The symbolism would certainly have not been lost on the audiences of Shakespeare's day: on the left stand the figure of Aaron and his disciples ranged against the innocent Lucius, disciple of the masked Titus. Such a presentation would definitely establish the allegorical identification of Virtue and Vice and maintain the essence of the morality play. The entrance of Titus into the court also foreshadows Titus's eventual descent to hell to free the souls enslaved by the forces of evil, another tradition emphasized in the morality play and frequently termed the harrowing of hell. Indeed, that is Titus's role in the scene. He has come into the heart of the Roman hell with gifts and a message warning the brothers to repent. Young Lucius delivers the gifts and warns the brothers to be "armed and appointed well" (line 19) in case of future need.

Exeunt Boy and Attendant.

The dramatic effect of having Titus present for the delivery of the message further fortifies his intention to do only those things within the range of pietas in order to restore Rome to order.

Demetrius reads the message:
The brothers do not understand the import of the note; Aaron does understand and wishes only that Tamora were well enough (she's abed with child) to applaud Titus's conceit. Without their realization, Titus and the gods have begun their revenge on members of the Saturnalian group. At the same time as Titus's gifts and message have marked the beginning of the end for the brothers, the gods have presented the gift of a child to Tamora, a child destined to bring Aaron to his knees.

At first Aaron understands the message from Titus as a "mad message from his (young Lucius) mad grandfather" (line 4). Success has taken him off guard and he casually dismisses Titus's warning in a series of jests to Demetrius and Chiron about the decline of the Andronici and the rise of their own fortunes:

"...was't not a happy star
Lead us to Rome, strangers, and more than so,
Captives, to be advanced to this height?"

(A37-39)

Aaron has failed to recognize the revival of active virtue in Rome. Only when Demetrius reminds the celebrants to pray to all the gods for "our beloved Mother in her pains" (line 53), does Aaron seem to reflect on the true significance of the message. He suddenly recognizes that "the gods have given

\[3\]"The man who is pure of life and free from crime has no need for Moorish javelins or bows." Horace, Odes. I. xxii. 1-2.
us over" (line 54). His reflection gains in ironic effect when he shortly discovers that Tamora's child is definitely his. Aaron's plan to shipwreck Rome has caught him in its destructive wake.

Trumpets sound.

Enter Nurse, with a blackamoor Child.

At first Aaron does not see the child. The dialogue suggests that he is celebrating the birth of the Emperor's son as announced by the sounding trumpets. Then the Nurse informs him of the truth. The child is a "devil" (line 75) and a "joyless, dismal, black and sorrowful issue" (line 75). The gods have begun their revenge with a cruel joke; and Titus, unlike his enemies, has not had to resort to Moorish javelins and bows. Tamora and Aaron have been found out, and Rome has been reduced to further disorder. By their luxury Aaron and Tamora have created confusion and division among their own.

Now aware of Aaron's true nature, Demetrius and Chiron engage the Moor in argument. They wish to kill the child as Tamora has ordered. Aaron takes the child from the Nurse and draws his sword in defense. He speaks as a personification of evil in defense of himself and the forces of darkness:

Stay, murderous villains! Will you kill your brother? Now, by the burning tapers of the sky That shown so brightly when this boy was get, He dies upon my scimitar's sharp point That touches this my first-born son and heir! I tell you, younglings, not Enceladus,
With all his threat'ning band of Typhon's brood,
Nor great Alcides, nor the god of war,
Shall seize this prey out of his father's hands.
What, what, ye sanguine, shallow-hearted boys!
Ye white-limed walls! ye alehouse painted signs!
Coal black is better than another hue;
In that it scorns to bear another hue;
For all the water in the ocean
Can never turn the swan's black legs to white,
Although she lave them hourly in the flood.

Aaron declares the baby an offspring of darkness, a contradiction of its supposed origin; and he catalogues the legendary giants, monsters, and gods who will never wrest his child away from him. He has omitted one person more powerful than all, Jupiter; and it will be Lucius, Jupiter's surrogate in Rome, who will eventually tear father and son apart.

Aaron's words betray the loneliness of evil. Demetrius and Chiron are quick to recognize the truth, and they quickly abandon their allegiance to Aaron. In fact, they would prefer to eliminate the sign of their mother's evil doings. Thus the loneliness of Titus has found a dramatic parallel in the loneliness of Aaron. In this scene the two have again encountered one other, and each now stands with a child as a symbol of future good or evil in Rome. Just as Titus has not sought for sympathy, so Aaron does not look for pity for himself or his child. Demetrius and Chiron had become his sons through the hunt; Titus had lost his in that same hunt. Young Lucius symbolically becomes Titus' son in a greater hunt for truth and justice. The black "tadpole" (line 98) in Aaron's arms is the evil counterpart of Young Lucius and the symbol of the
cosmic evil with which Aaron wishes to conquer the world. Thesis has confronted antithesis, and the moral issue of the play becomes patently clear.

When Aaron is secure in his own mind that only the Nurse and the midwife know of the strange birth, he kills the Nurse and sends for the midwife. He then plays upon the brothers' fear for their mother's safety by engaging them in a plot to hide the truth from the Emperor. He sends them to a friend, another Moor married to a white woman who has just given birth to a white child. Demetrius and Chiron are to place this white child with Tamora and thus fool the Emperor, who will "dandle him for his own" (line 117). The brothers agree to the plan out of a strange sense of gothic pietas.

Exeunt Demetrius and Chiron bearing off the Nurse's body.

Shakespeare has reversed the plot so breathlessly it is difficult to remember that all of the actions of this scene began with the delivery of a simple message to Demetrius and Chiron. The greatest irony of the message is now revealed: the enemy is routed out of its complacency, and Titus has not lifted a finger in violence. The only explanation for the brothers' fear is that they recognize justice in action; and as a result of fear, Aaron has also been stripped of his Moorish javelins and bows. He has only evil desperation within himself to protect and guide him.

The finale of the scene has a sense of pathos as Aaron addresses his infant son:
Come on, you thick-lipped slave, I'll bear you hence. For it is you that puts us to our shifts. I'll make you feed on berries and on roots, And feed on curds and whey, and suck the goat, And cabin in a cave, and bring you up To be a warrior and command a camp. 

(192-197)

It is the creed of a true Roman out of the Andronici past. Aaron espouses, for the moment, the creed of pietas. Pietas has conquered with a cruel irony, and Roman fortune becomes one with her counterpart fate.

Exit.

In the next scene Titus will make his descent into the mythological hell of Aeneas. To appreciate the analogy between Titus and Aeneas, it is necessary to review two distinct traditions: the medieval literary tradition of the harrowing of hell and the ancient Roman tradition of the golden bough. In the medieval morality plays the harrowing of hell referred to a portrayal of Christ's descent into limbo in order to release the souls of the faithful who awaited redemption. The same dramatic tradition also remained a part of the theatre of the tableaux and the Rederyker stage. Even in Shakespeare's day, a descent to hell would have been achieved by exiting through a trapdoor to a place beneath the stage.

The tradition of the golden bough is one of the most revered in Roman history and literature. In Virgil's myth, Aeneas was commissioned to find the Golden Bough to serve as

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4E. Martin Browne, Religious Drama 2, pp. 7-21.
5Kernodle, From Art to Theatre, passim.
his passport to the Underworld. The identity of the Golden Bough has never been resolved. Sir James Frazer has suggested simply a golden branch at one point and a misteltoe bough at another. Neither opinion has gained acceptance by critics. In his book, The Vergilian Age, Robert Conway has proposed a most reasonable theory. He begins by asking: what ideas does Virgil connect most closely with this golden image? what commands are given Aeneas? what kind of meeting does he seek? what kind of revelation crowns his journey? The Aeneid answers the questions. Aeneas gains divine power with the possession of the Golden Bough. He performs a divine feat by the actual possession of the bough since this is a privilege reserved only to the divine. Thus the bough has an element of power beyond the mortal. Further, Aeneas learns what his mission is: he is to found a new and great nation in Italy. That nation, Rome, will have the task of restoring the Golden Age under Augustus. During the reign of Augustus, peace justice, harmony, and merciful government were to be restored everywhere. At the moment of meeting Anchises, his father, who will tell him of his mission, Aeneas discovers the meaning of the Golden Bough. Anchises tells him that his (Aeneas' 5) pietas brought him to the Underworld. Ironically, Aeneas found the Golden Bough as he was performing

6Conway, The Vergilian Age, pp. 41-49.
7Ibid.
yet another act of *pietas* in burying a friend.\(^8\) Conway says:

> The point need not, surely be labored further
> If the Golden Bough was not connected in Vergil's mind with the strength of natural affection, with the ties between father and son, between son and mother, between friend and friend, then it was at least a most happy accident that, in his story, linked such motives so closely to so beautiful an image. And in great poets accidents rarely happen.\(^9\)

There is no way of proving that Shakespeare intended that *pietas* be a Golden Bough for Titus. Even if the similarity between Aeneas and Titus is not intentional, the analogy of each having the same divine-like power cannot be denied.

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\(^8\)Ibid.

\(^9\)Ibid., p. 48.
Scene III. Rome. A public place.

Enter Titus, old Marcus, Young Lucius, other Gentlemen Publius, Sempronius, and Caius, with bows; and Titus bears the arrows with letters on the ends of them.

Titus leads a second solemn hunting; this time, the hunt is metaphorical and allegorical. Now the game is justice and the quarry is revenge. Unlike the first hunt, this one takes place in the public places of Rome, the new wilderness of tigers. As the scene progresses, Titus's wit and feigned madness remain consistent; and as before, he continues to speak in the conceits and language of the library. He quotes Ovid's Metamorphoses:

Terras Astraea reliquit.\(^\text{10}\)

(line 5)

In his search for Justice (Astraea), Titus will attempt to ensnare the revengeful agents who have ruined him and brought disorder to Rome. Titus has not yet admitted that he has been responsible for driving justice out of Rome by his choice of Saturninus as Emperor. He now has one final opportunity to find Justice: he must send messages by arrow to the heavens, dig into the center of the earth, and eventually descend to the Underworld. Having already prayed to Apollo for guidance, Titus prepares to journey to the Underworld to

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\(^{10}\) "Justice has fled the earth." Ovid, Metamorphoses, Book I. Ovid tells in Book I the story of the overthrow of Saturn and the end of the golden age. It was at that time that justice fled the earth and sought refuge in the Underworld.
find the absent virtue.

The scene has two serious problems: is Titus mad or not, and does he actually descend to hell? The answers are not simple. He is not mad in the traditional sense of the revenge figure who goes insane because of his suffering and consequent hatred for his enemies. Rather, his madness is the irrational obsession with the pursuit of perfect pietas. Moreover, critics have traditionally tended to accept the evidence within the play that Titus is feigning madness in this instance and others throughout the play. Geoffrey Bullough says:

Act IV, scene 3 shows how Shakespeare could develop the germ of an idea from a source, which tells how Titus 'feigned himself distracted and went ravishing about the City, shooting his Arrows towards Heaven, as in Defiance, calling to Hell for Vengeance'. On the phrase 'shooting his Arrows towards Heaven' the dramatist built a scene in which the 'mad' old man teaches young Lucius to shoot his arrows upwards, tipped with messages to the gods; but Marcus directs them into the Court where they are taken to prove Titus's insanity.

There is no evidence in the play to contradict Bullough. In the course of this study, special attention will be given to the various manifestations of Titus's masquerade.

Howard Baker also sees Titus's madness as feigned "in order to allay the suspicions of his enemies and to contrive his triumph over them."\(^{12}\) This, of course, does not

\(^{11}\) Bullough, Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare, pp. 18-19.

\(^{12}\) Baker, Induction to Tragedy, p. 126.
explain how Titus may actually have been mad. Baker explains that Titus superficially resembles Kyd's Hieronimo in the demeanor and language of madness. That conclusion is acceptable; however, he does not prove that Titus is, in some manner, mad. He simply compares Titus's madness to that of Hamlet, concludes by calling both "ambiguous,"\textsuperscript{13} and lets the problem go at that. It is a contention of this study that, on the one hand, Titus's madness is feigned for purposes already stated and that, on the other, it is real as a result of an obsessive desire to pursue justice and \textit{pietas} beyond the rational mean. In summation, Titus is obsessively driven to pursue certain goals; but he retains control of the means whereby he achieves those goals.

The descent to hell also has an ambiguity to it. There is no doubt that Titus does not literally descend into the Underworld. That he does so in an allegorical fashion seems especially fitting within the context of the pursuit of virtue and because of the close parallel between him and Aeneas. Additional support for an allegorical descent comes from the notion of the harrowing of hell. Only after his return from the "burning lake" (line 44) does Titus begin to act in the aggressive role of protagonist. He seems to have found new strength, new courage, and renewed purpose to save the people of Rome. An analysis of the text will provide

\textsuperscript{13}Ibid., p. 236.
support for these conclusions.

Titus commands the members of his party to go about their tasks of finding justice:

Sirs, take you to your tools. You, cousins, shall
Go sound the ocean, and cast your nets:
Happily you may catch her in the sea.
Yet there's as little justice as at land.
No! Publius and Sempronius, you must do it:
'Tis you must dig with mattock and with spade,
And pierce the inmost center of the earth.
Then, when you come to Pluto's region,
I pray you, deliver him this petition:
Tell him, it is for justice and for aid,
And that it comes from old Andronicus,
Shaken with sorrows in ungrateful Rome.  

(7-18)

Titus has great need to deliver a petition to the Underworld, asking for a return of justice to the earth. He receives no answer until later when Tamora approaches him disguised as Revenge; however, at this point he suddenly hears himself speak the awful truth that has avoided him:

Ah, Rome! Well, well; I made thee miserable
What time I threw the people's suffrages
On him that thus doth tyrannize o'er me.  

(19-21)

He has finally recognized his failure, and his next words indicate there is no turning back for him. He must find true justice to redeem himself and Rome:

Go, get you gone; and pray be careful all,
And leave you not a man-of-war unsearched.
This wicked Emperor may have shipped her hence;
And, kinsmen, then we may go pipe for justice.  

(22-25)

Although Titus has no proof that Saturninus is directly responsible for many of the evils, he sees the Emperor as the protective cloak for the evil deeds of his court.
When Titus concludes his speech, he apparently moves away from the hunting party; for the ensuing conversation clearly indicates his absence from the group. Marcus and the party discuss Titus's conditions and future plans:

Mar. O Publius, is not this a heavy case,
To see thy noble uncle thus distract?
Pub. Therefore, my lord, it highly us concerns
By day and night attend him carefully
And feed his humor kindly as we may
Till time begets some careful remedy.
Mar. Kinsmen, his sorrows are past remedy.
Join with the Goths and with revengeful war
Take wreak on Rome for this ingratitude,
And vengeance on the traitor Saturnine.

(26-35)

Marcus seems confused, for he sees Titus as merely distracted on the one hand and beyond help on the other. Publius seems closer to the truth of the matter in his supposition that time will heal Titus's sorrow. Marcus's confusion, however, is justified by previous events. It is of some interest that Marcus is still calling for revenge since he has yet to show himself equal to the task.

Titus's absence from the group can be accomplished with a slight editing of the text. In his famous production of the play, Peter Brook removed Titus completely from the stage in a most fitting and spectacular way. He transposed lines 45 and 46 from this same scene to the conclusion of Titus's order to his party.¹⁴ Thus line 25 is followed

immediately by:

    I'll dive into the burning lake below
    And pull her out of Acheron by the heels.
    (45-46)

Brook then staged Titus diving into an imaginary lake. Brook's solution does not violate the text; in fact it resolves several problems. By the transposition of the lines to an earlier position, Titus can carry out his resolve to dive into the lake and metaphorically pull justice out of Acheron by the heels. If the lines are left in their original position, there is no way within the context of the full speech that Titus can possibly leave the stage. Thus his words would become only a grandiose poetic brag. Transposed as indicated above, the lines also help Titus to assume an active role in the search for justice. In addition, the new reading of the text brings together all the mythological allusions into one sequence and fortifies the myth analogue between Titus and Aeneas. By adding a piece of spectacular stage action to the play, Brook reinforced Titus's role in the harrowing of hell. Moreover, Titus's absence from the stage is covered by the dialogue between Marcus and Publius (lines 26-35) and easily justifies Titus's re-entry into the main action with his question:

    Publius, how now! How now, my masters!
    What, have you met with her?
    (36-37)

    Titus has thus become allegorically the legendary hero Aeneas seeking to know the mystery of Rome's future;
and, despite his suffering, he has refused to abandon the virtue responsible for Rome's condition. Actually, he has engaged in an almost fanatical search for the ideal of justice itself. By his behavior Titus has also shown his own need to experience both a union with and an eventual psychic metamorphosis into the ideal virtuous state. Even within Titus the thesis and antithesis of the real and the ideal struggle for some sort of synthesis. Now Titus's tragedy becomes more and more apparent; he aspires to the divine. His pietas overwhelms his reason and demands of him that he become a surrogate for virtue in the world of Rome.

Part of Titus's tragedy is that he aspires after a contradiction: the contemplative ideal in the active life. Identification with virtue is the ascetical ideal of the contemplative who has the advantage of being a recluse. Titus is not so fortunate. He must remain in the world and face its most hostile forces.

Now convinced of Titus's insanity, Marcus and members of the hunting party proceed to humor him. Publius joins the masquerade and answers Titus's question:

No, my good lord, but Pluto sends you word,
If you will have revenge from hell, you shall.
Marry, for Justice, she is so employed
He thinks, with Jove in Heaven, or somewhere else,
So that perforce you must needs stay a time.

(38-42)

Illusion and reality have become one in a moment of pietic madness, and the polite masquerade on the part of Publius plays right into Titus's hands. He has the arrows with which
to assault the heavens. From this time onward, Titus controls the stage. What he has seen in his journey to hell is not known, only that he is once again a man of action who will not brook delay: "He doth me wrong to feed me with delays" (line 43). His first important speech after the entrance shows a man of resolve and commitment to justice:

Marcus, we are but shrubs, no cedars we,
No big-boned men framed of the Cyclops' size;
But metal, Marcus, steel to the very back,
Yet wrung with wrongs more than our backs can bear.
And sith there's no justice in earth nor hell,
We will solicit heaven and move the gods
To send down Justice for to wreak our wrongs.

(46-52)

Titus again unites his cause with the Heavens and in doing so reveals what he has seen in the symbolic hell of his own soul: his weakness and inability to do what he must alone. He must unite his cause with heaven in a holy war. It is time to assault heaven with petitions for help.

He gives them the arrows.

To Marcus he gives the letter for Jupiter; to Lucius, the letter for Pallas Athena; to Caius, the letter for Saturn. Here Titus shows that he is back to his state of pretended madness: however, he has lost neither his wit nor his sense of humor. He admonishes Caius to shoot the letter at Saturn not Saturninus. Shrewdly, he has kept for himself the letter to Mars. It is a fitting gesture for several reasons. As a military man Titus most appropriately should petition the god of war, especially since Mars is also the father of Romulus, founder of Rome.
Then for some unexplained reason Marcus orders the archers to shoot their arrows into the court of Saturninus. It is apparently a futile gesture, one suitable to the politically impotent Marcus. Not all follow Marcus's lead, but the future events in the play will prove how effective the action is.

**They shoot.**

The staging of the arrows sequence would certainly have been exciting in Shakespeare's day. The remarks made as the arrows are released indicate that some of the arrows lodged themselves in the ceiling of the stage house (the heavens) and others continued their flight completely out of the theatre. Young Lucius lands his arrow in Virgo's lap. Titus then tells someone to give Pallas Athena the same treatment. The allusion is earthy, but relatively innocent. Marcus's letter has missed the ceiling and is on its way to the court of Saturninus. Marcus jokingly says that it is on its way to Jupitor. Then in a mixture of myth and merriment, Titus laughs:

Ha, ha!
Publius, Publius, what hast thou done?
See, see, thou hast shot off one of Taurus' horns.

(69-71)

Marcus understands the joke and continues the sport at the

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Kernodle, From Art to Theatre, pp. 130-153. The reconstruction of this scene relies upon Kernodle's findings related to the ceiling of the Elizabethan stage.
expense of Saturninus's court:

This was the sport, my lord. When Publius shot,  
The Bull, being galled, gave Aries such a knock  
That down fell both the Ram's horns in the court;  
And who should find them but the Empress' villain?  
She laughed and told the Moor he should not choose  
But give them to his master for a present.  

(72-77)

The Andronici enjoy a heady moment. They have flaunted the Emperor in the streets of Rome. Everyone seems to know of the cuckoldry except the Emperor himself. This act of defiance toward the Emperor rises directly out of a petition to the heavens for justice. Shakespeare has added a most fascinating reminder. When Aeneas petitioned the gods for help, he was compelled to sacrifice a bull and a sheep. Titus accommodates the myth by sacrificing the theatrical images of the bull and the ram.

Enter the Clown, with a basket, and two pigeons in it.

The entire scene is ultimately reduced to a moment of comic relief, and Titus plays the farce to the hilt. He pretends that the clown has brought an answer from Jupiter:

News, news from Heaven! Marcus, the post is come.  
Sirrah, what tidings? Have you any letters?  
Shall I have justice? What says Jupiter?  

(81-83)

In this mad theatrical sequence, Titus instigates the conversation with an inversion of the name of Jupiter. The rhetorical magic works, and the clown unknowingly plays along with the joke. He thinks Titus speaks of the gibbet maker:

Ho, the gibbet maker! He says that he hath taken
them down again, for the man must not be hanged till the next week.

(84-86)

His own stupidity is to prepare the way for his death on the gallows. As they banter, Titus sees an opportunity to vex Saturninus. The clown is on his way with his pigeons to the tribunes to settle an argument between his uncle and one of the Emperor's men. Titus persuades the clown to deliver one of the letters, not yet shot, with the pigeons to Saturninus:

And when you come to him, at the first approach you must kneel; then kiss his foot; then deliver up your pigeons; and then look for your reward.

(114-116)

As the clown attempts to leave, Titus restrains him for one last joke. He has Marcus tie a knife, the clown's own, inside the letter. Titus will taunt the Emperor even more with the veiled threat of physical danger. His audacity approaches arrogance; he knows he is about to win the battle against evil. The clown departs with a most fitting farewell:

God be with you, sir: I will.

(line 124)

Sadly the clown has no way of knowing that he has predicted the tragic end awaiting both him and Titus. The scene ends as Titus proudly leads his hunting party offstage; he has no more time for suffering. He has thrown down the gauntlet and the holy war has begun. He concludes the scene with a military command: "follow me" (line 125).

Exeunt.
Scene IV. Rome. Before the palace.

Enter Emperor Saturninus and Tamora, and her two Sons, Lords, and others; the Emperor brings the arrows in his hand that Titus shot at him.

Saturninus controls the scene at the opening with a long tirade excoriating Titus's "feigned ecstasies" (line 22) and his accusations of injustices in the court. In the speech Saturninus indicates that he is simultaneously both ignorant of and knowledgeable about the state of Rome. He acknowledges the pain Titus has suffered, but he seems unaware of the trickery played upon Titus by Aaron. In his own mind, Saturninus rests upon the observance of the law and resents the behavior of the Andronici. He sees their actions as both revengeful and mutinous:

My lords, you know, as know the mighty gods, however these disturbers of our peace Buzz in the people's ears, there nought has passed But even with law against the willful sons Of old Andronicus.

(6-10)

Neither Saturninus's words nor his thoughts have the power to make Titus's actions either vengeful or conspiratorial. Moreover, his protestations indicate a lack of authority. It is difficult to believe in the Emperor at this point. Either he is grossly ignorant, or he has walked blindly through his administration without being aware the machinations performed in his name. In effect, he is the tool of almost everyone in the play; the ultimate conclusion is that he is also the tool of the playwright. Nothing else
explains the inconsistency of Saturninus's characterization except that it serves a needed dramatic and expository function. Tamora soothes the furious Emperor by appealing to Titus's age and sufferings as excuses for the old man's behavior. She follows her act with an aside that reveals she not only knows more than Saturninus, but she also fears for herself and Aaron. Recognition of the true state of affairs within the Andronici family has apparently reached Tamora; however, she also remains ignorant of other things:

But, Titus, I have touched thee to the quick, Thy lifeblood out: if Aaron now be wise, Then is all safe, the anchor in the port. (39-41)

She does not know of the impending alliance between the Andronici and the Goths. She still believes that she can destroy Titus and his brood.

Enter Clown.

The clown greets the Emperor with a message from "God and Saint Stephen" (line 46). Shakespeare thus cloaks the figure of Titus with still another image of high moral standing and commitment to ethical purpose. Saint Stephen, the first Christian martyr, was accused of blasphemy and stoned to death. The image brings to mind Titus's own ordeal on the stones of the streets of Rome. Saturninus reads the letter and condemns the clown to death by hanging; Titus's arrows have already begun to take their toll. His rage unabated, Saturninus orders Titus brought to him:

Go, drag the villain hither by the hair:
Nor age nor honor shall shape privilege. 
For this proud mock I'll be the slaughterman, 
Sly frantic wretch, that holpst make me great, 
In hope thyself should govern Rome and me.  
(60-64)

This is the closest Saturninus comes to a recognition of the truth thus far. In his pride he has overlooked the clue offered by the allusion to Saint Stephen. He sees Titus only as a jealous usurper and not as a martyr to the Roman cause. He recognizes only the pretended madness of Titus without seeing the virtue of pietas that helped to make him (Saturninus) great.

Enter Nuntius Aemilius.

Aemilius informs the party that the Goths have begun their march on Rome under Lucius "Who threats, in course of revenge, to do/As much as ever Coriolanus did" (69-70). Shakespeare has again chosen the correct image, since it was the legendary Coriolanus who joined with the Volscians and marched on Rome. The playwright now uses Saturninus again to make an important statement—a statement that indicates an uncharacteristic perspicacity on the part of Saturninus:

'Tis he the common people love so much:  
Myself have often heard them say, 
When I have walked like a private man, 
That Lucius' banishment was wrongfully, 
And they have wished that Lucius were their Emperor.  
(77-81)

It is obvious craftsmanship, but Shakespeare has no one else to do the job. Such a bald stroke offends aesthetic sensivities greater than any device of horror or bloodshed. Moreover, it is unthinkable that Saturninus could have gone
walking in the streets without hearing other things. Besides, Saturninus would simply have not had the cunning to walk disguised in the streets of Rome.

Tamora assuages the Emperor's fear with a promise to avert war. She plans bravely; it will be her last command. She thinks she can outwit Titus, but her words reveal an ignorance of the true nature of Titus and his pietas:

I will enchant the old Andronicus  
With words more sweet, and yet more dangerous,  
Than baits to fish or honey stalks to sheep,  
Whenas the one is wounded with the bait,  
The other rotted with delicious feed.  
(95-99)

Nothing that Tamora can do or say will restrain Titus in his pursuit of justice. The irony in her words can be understood only within the context of her final scene in which she eats her own children baked in a pie. Just as the bodies of sheep, dead from overeating delicious honey stalks, lie rotting in the fields, so the body of Tamora will swell with human flesh as it lies in the streets of Rome. And her feast of human flesh will be offered in an act of neighborly piety.

Saturninus still fears Lucius, but Tamora has a solution for that problem also. She requests a meeting of Lucius and the Emperor at the house of the Andronici. Tamora has given up her position of strength and has played into the hands of her nemesis. Saturninus accepts the plan and follows Tamora's lead in giving up his position of strength also. He immediately sends a message to Lucius to "demand what pledge will please him best" (line 112). The Andronici have closed
in on the quarry by shooting astray a few harmless arrows.
The fear of Saturninus and the false bravery of Tamora ring
in their words:

Tam. Now will I to that old Andronicus
   And temper him with all the art I have,
   To pluck proud Lucius from the warlike Goths. 
   And now, sweet Emperor, be blithe again
   And bury all thy fear in my devices.
Sat. Then go successantly and plead to him.
     (114-119)

A note of tragic sadness vibrates at the end of Act IV as the
Emperor and Empress slowly begin to recognize that they no
longer hold the position of power in Rome. Saturninus's
command that Tamora plead his cause is the faint whimper of
power brought to its knees. Thus Act IV ends with the greatest
discovery of all: that Titus again rules Rome. Only Titus
knows that he will continue to act with justice and pietas
tempered by his suffering and his descent to the Underworld.

Exeunt.
CHAPTER VI

MASQUERADES AND METAMORPHOSES

The Transforming and Purifying Power of Pietas as Illustrated in Act V

Events in Act V reveal a final metaphorical transformation of Titus into the virtue of pietas. On the converse, Titus's enemies are shown to have undergone their own appropriate metamorphoses. Tamora becomes the tool of revenge; Aaron approaches evil incarnate; Saturninus is reduced to the empty shell of a posturing Emperor; and all this occurs as a result of Titus's categorical pursuit of justice. All of his opponents, in their attempts to overcome or pervert pietas, have been allegorically transformed by action into the epitome of their respective vices. On the side of virtue, metamorphoses have also occurred. Most important, after Titus, is the transformation that has brought Lucius to the position of general and principal heir to Roman authority and pietas. However, despite the metamorphoses that have taken place, the major characters continue to employ masquerades as a device for deception and as a weapon in the struggle for survival.
ACT V

Scene I. Plains near Rome.

_Flourish. Enter Lucius with an army of Goths with Drums and Soldiers._

Lucius enters in the role of a general, much the same as his father had done earlier. The antithetical nature of Lucius's entrance, however, shows him as leader of Rome's hated enemy, the Goths. He has been forced to utilize the Goths, whom his father had conquered, as protectors against an even greater danger than themselves. How Lucius has persuaded the Goths to follow him is not yet known, but his first speech indicates his success at negotiation and his readiness to assume the role of Emperor of all of Rome and her neighbors:

> Approved warriors, and faithful friends,
> I have received letters from great Rome
> Which signifies what hate they bear their Emperor
> And how desirous of our sight they are.
> Therefore, great lords, be, as your titles witness,
> Imperious and impatient of your wrongs;

(1-6)

Already Lucius and the Goths are "faithful friends" and their causes are united in a mutual hatred of Saturninus. There is a marked difference between the Lucius who addresses the Goths and the Lucius who hacked Alarbus's body to pieces as part of the Roman burial rites.

The brief exchange which follows between Lucius and the Goths has a distinctly Shakespearean touch. Since the playwright has no time to show how Lucius persuaded Goths to align themselves with him, he relays expository material
in the guise of an accomplished fact. The Goths simply tell of their admiration for Lucius:

Brave slip, sprung from the great Andronicus, Whose hand was once our terror, now our comfort; Whose high exploits and honorable deeds Ungrateful Rome requites with foul contempt, Be bold in us. We'll follow where thou leadest, Like stinging bees in hottest summer's day, Led by their master to the flowered fields, And be avenged on cursed Tamora.

(10-17)

Even the Goths have undergone a transformation that seems generated by their disgust at offended pietas. The Goths now talk like Romans. Shakespeare has chosen not to tell his audience how this transformation took place, only that it did. The only acceptable reason implied by the text is that the strength and nobility of Lucius, acting with pietic reverence for Rome, has been responsible.

Enter a Goth, leading of Aaron with his Child in his arms.

The play is quickly reversed in focus and tone. In a long expository speech, an unnamed Goth outlines with great realism of language the details of Aaron's capture. The speech serves two purposes: it brings Lucius up-to-date on the situation with his enemies, and it reveals a slightly more sympathetic Aaron truly concerned for his infant son. Lucius refuses to be swayed by any hint of humanity in Aaron; he knows only of the Moor's duplicity and brands him "the devil incarnate" (line 42). Then, to guarantee that the Goths are fully aware of Aaron's true nature, Lucius informs the Goths of the black man's evil deeds. Lucius obviously controls the situation:
"A halter, soldiers! Hang him on this tree,  
And by his side his fruit of bastardy

. . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
First hang the child that he may see it sprawl;  
A sight to vex the father's soul withal.
Get me a ladder.

(49-55)

A ladder brought, which Aaron is made to ascend.

The action of the play must be interrupted here for a pertinent observation. It seems especially significant that this is the moment at which Aaron is closest to death in the entire play. Further events will show that neither Aaron nor his son are actually killed within the action of the play despite this and further death sentences. More will be said later.

As Aaron stands atop the ladder, presumably with the noose around his neck, he pleads for his son's life, by bargaining. He offers to Lucius, "the brighter," a knowledge of all the evil in the world of Rome:

If thou do this, I'll show thee wondrous things  
That highly may advantage thee to hear.  
If thou wilt not, befall what may befall,  
I'll speak no more, but vengeance rot you all!

(58-61)

Unable to resist the temptation, Lucius promises to spare the child and see it nourished. Aaron presses his point; he refuses to accept a simple promise from Lucius. He demands that Lucius swear an oath or he will not fulfill his part of the bargain. He tempts Lucius with an even more enticing promise of evil knowledge:

For I must talk of murders, rapes, and massacres,
Acts of black night, abominable deeds,  
Complots of mischief, treason, villainies  
Ruthful to hear, yet piteously performed.  
(66-69)

Lucius refuses by insisting that Aaron accept his word in good faith. He will not swear since Aaron believes in no god and, thus, no oath. Aaron is quick to respond:

What if I do not? as, indeed, I do not:  
Yet, for I know thou art religious  
And hath a thing within thee called conscience,  
With twenty popish tricks and ceremonies,  
Which I have seen thee careful to observe,  
Therefore I urge thy oath.  
(77-82)

Lucius responds immediately: "Even by my god I swear to thee I will" (line 90). Aaron's trickery has worked again, and Lucius is trapped into an act of piety to his own god. Then Aaron schools Lucius in the catalogue of evils he has sponsored in Rome. When Lucius inquires if Aaron is sorry for his deeds, the Moor answers: "Ay, that I had not done a thousand more" (line 130). Aaron follows this statement of purpose with a celebratory litany of all his evil mischief, a list so heinous that Lucius halts the hanging:

Bring down the devil, for he must not die  
So sweet a death as hanging presently.  
(151-152)

Aaron's reply indicates that Shakespeare has momentarily moved away from the tragedy of Titus into a morality play in which the forces of light (Lucius) and darkness (Aaron) contend:

If there be devils, would I were a devil,  
To live and burn in everlasting fire,  
So I might have your company in hell
But to torment you with my bitter tongue!
(153-156)

Unfortunately for Lucius, Aaron seems to have won the battle. Lucius can only command that Aaron speak no more. It is a hollow victory and casts serious doubts on Lucius's assumption of power at the end of the play. Lucius's actions also indicate an ambivalence in moral purpose. On the other hand, Aaron remains steadfast in his evil; his apparent transformation earlier in the scene was only a mask to hide his true intent. It is an inauspicious beginning for the future Emperor; his first real order is never carried out to completion. The scene has a profound influence on the moral projection of the play. Rarely, if ever, is the possibility discussed that Lucius may have sold his soul to the devil here. If that is the case, the survival of Aaron and his son at the end of the play, even though Aaron is later to be killed, clearly indicates a philosophical posture within the play that evil cannot or will not be eradicated by man.

Enter Aemilius.

The scene is terminated by the news from Rome: the Emperor wishes a parley at the house of the Andronici. Lucius preserves his honor at the very end of the scene when the messenger requests to know Lucius's demands for hostages. The young man shows pietas in deferring to his father and uncle on the issue:

Aemilius, let the Emperor give his pledges
Unto my father and my uncle Marcus,
And we will come. March away.
(170-172)

**Flourish. Exeunt.**

Enter Tamora and her two Sons, disguised.

The convention of the masquerade is repeated again with the appearance of Tamora as Revenge and Demetrius and Chiron as Murder and Rape respectively. Thus the playwright blends two motifs into one action: metamorphosis and masquerade. The masquerade entrance into the house of Titus also serves as the antithesis to Titus's masked entrance to the court in the company of the young Lucius. Tamora's opening lines reinforce the argument that the enemies of Titus have been transformed into the epitome of their respective vices:

Thus, in this strange and sad habiliment,
I will encounter with Andronicus
And say I am Revenge, sent from below
To join with him and right his heinous wrongs.
Knock at his study, where they say he keeps
To ruminate strange plots of dire revenge:
Tell him Revenge is come to join with him
And work confusion on his enemies.

(1-8)

Tamora has unwittingly presented herself in the camp of her greatest enemy on the supposition that an insane Titus is actively seeking revenge. She is wrong on both counts; and her clever masquerade, designed to humor and deceive the supposedly insane Titus, results in her own deception.

They knock and Titus opens his study door.

Titus answers as the stoic who has retreated from the world in a contemplative pursuit of learning and virtue:

Who doth molest my contemplation?
Is it your trick to make me open the door,
That so my sad decrees may fly away
and all my study be to no effect?
(9-12)

Throughout the play Shakespeare has periodically cloaked Titus in the garb of the Roman Stoic who has sought ataxaria: freedom from disturbance, renunciation of luxury, independence of thought, and imperturbability. Unfortunately for Titus, ataxaria has escaped him because of the contradiction inherent in Stoic action: the pursuit of moral perfection. As has been earlier discussed, Titus seeks the contemplative ideal in the active life of political involvement. More than that, the pursuit of pietas or the perfection of any virtue paradoxically contains within it the very dissolution of self by an ultimate consuming union with the Logos or the Mind of Zeus. The Stoic saw the universe animated by the divine spark (Logos) in which every man and social or political unit had a share. Compatibility with the Logos presupposed the possession of absolute virtue or continued progress toward virtue. Realizing that absolute virtue was hardly possible, the Stoic settled for the more realistic goal: constant progress toward the virtuous state.  

To Titus and to many historical Romans, the loyalist mystique or the pietic family was the ideal composite virtue. For many Romans, such as Virgil, Tacitus, and Seneca, even the literary ideal found its integrity in a fusion of the

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2Ibid.
Stoic and the pietic. For Titus the pietic family virtue became a syndrome of madness, real and protended; he had forgotten or willfully overlooked the fact that the pursuit of virtue must always be rooted in human possibility. At the beginning of this scene, he has retired to the lofty heights of his study, an action uncharacteristic of him since his earlier actions had been filled with the pride of virtuous pursuit and a disdain for the less virtuous. Perhaps he has retreated to the silence of his study as an escape from action; more than likely, he has gone there to prepare himself for the final battle. He knows he must now open the door and descend to the madness of Rome as Titus Andronicus, a man and a Roman. He recognizes the inevitability of his mission and thus resembles Aeneas more than at any other time:

Aeneas represented that fusion of the Roman and Stoic ideals, the man who presses on, in unremitting endeavor, regardless of the buffets and obstacles of life. There is also a dramatic evolution of character. The first epic hero to be an adult human being rather than a superman or superhuman adolescent, he does not at once become the complete Stoic; he has weaknesses, and only gradually overcomes them. Though destiny prevails, freedom of the will is not excluded.4

Titus must descend from the level of a superhuman Titan, which he is not, to perform those things necessary to fulfill his Stoic imperative: preserve Rome through ultimate patriotic acts beyond his personal vision. His is a lonely

3Ibid.

4Ibid., pp. 243-244.
and ultimately tragic mission, for he alone put himself in the role of Savior. He alone can achieve Stoic perfection by appeasing the gods for the return of good fortune to Rome. He must perform the necessary rituals and cleanse the holy places of Rome. What he must do will return peace to Rome and bring retribution to the Andronici family. His final challenge will be to maintain the virtuous intention without stooping to lustful revenge. Shakespeare has given him special assistance by opposing his actions with the physical embodiment of those revengeful things Titus must destroy in his soul and in Rome.

Titus's next words reveal that he knows his duty and the manner of execution, the masquerade:

You are deceived: for what I mean to do
See here in bloody lines I have set down;
And what is written shall be executed.  
(13-15)

What Titus has written is known only through his later actions, and those actions occur within the framework of the masquerade of madness.

The similarity of this scene to the previous one is remarkable. Titus is the antithesis of Aaron. He is elevated above Tamora and recites a litany of his woes:

Witness this wretched stump, witness these crimson lines;
Witness these trenches made by grief and care;
Witness the tiring day and the heavy night;

Witness all sorrows, . . . .

(24-27)

Like his evil counterpart Aaron, Titus tempts his opponent. Here Tamora is tricked into thinking that Titus is mad. Then in a brilliant arabesque, Titus is absolved from much of the blame of what is to follow. He becomes an instrument, knowingly and willingly. He allows Tamora to make the decisions affecting her own downfall. By being as gullible as Lucius had been earlier, Tamora allows Titus the advantage. She persists in a masquerade obviously detected by Titus:

. . . . that I know thee well
For our proud Empress, mighty Tamora!
Is not thy coming for my other hand?

(27-29)

She insists that she is not Tamora but Revenge sent to help Titus wreak havoc on his enemies. Titus is not fooled, but Tamora fails to see beyond the old man's own mask of madness. Thus she is at one and the same time the hunter and the hunted. Titus simply provides her with the opportunity to act and in turn to destroy herself. Again evil corrupts evil.

This is also the obligatory scene in the play, wherein the protagonist confronts his major antagonist. As if aware of the histrionic possibilities afforded by such a scene, Shakespeare assigns each character a magnificent speech filled with the poetry of evil, real and pretended. Tamora calls to Titus:

Come down and welcome me to this world's light:
Confer with me of murder and of death.
There's not a hollow cave or lurking place.
No vast obscurity or misty vale
Where bloody murder or detested rape
Can couch for fear but I will find them out
And in their ears tell them my dreadful name,
Revenge, which makes the foul offender quake.

(35-42)

Tamora speaks of her own fate; but Titus, seeing through her guise, wants more than poetry. He asks her to give some assurance of her honesty by stabbing or tearing apart her partners Rape and Murder. The bargaining here matches that between Aaron and Lucius. Titus wins the battle of wits and rhetoric with his speech:

And then I'll come and be thy wagoner
And whirl along with thee about the globes.
Provide thee two proper palfreys, black as jet,
To haul thy vengeful wagons swift away
And find out murderers in their guilty caves;
And when thy car is laden with their heads
I will dismount and by thy wagon wheel
Trot like a servile footman all day long,
Even from Hyperion's rising in the East
Until his very downfall in the sea.

(50-59)

There can be no doubt that Titus completely controls the situation; his madness is the crowning masquerade of the play; his metamorphosis into rational pietas is almost complete.

Tamora refuses to harm her ministers and Titus gives her one more opportunity to retreat. He again questions her identity and that of her sons:

Good Lord, how like the Empress' sons they are,
And you the Empress!

(66-67)

Then blaming his eyes for deceiving him, he agrees to come down to embrace them with his one good arm.

Exit from above.
As the three conspirators wait for Titus to reappear, they make final plans to trick Titus into sending for Lucius and to disperse the Goths marching on Rome. Tamora's plan will suit Titus very well:

I'll make him send for Lucius his son;  
And, whilst I at a banquet hold him sure,  
I'll find some cunning practice out of hand  
To scatter and disperse the giddy Goths,  
Or at least make them his enemies.  

(78-82)

Enter Titus, below.

With his entry Titus signals the beginning of the final gruesome masquerade. But instead of a Masque celebrating fertility or a united society, Titus Andronicus becomes an anti-Masque with its participants engaged in a ritual dance of death.

Titus welcomes them to his house with another warning: the three masquerades bear a striking resemblance to the Empress and her sons. He quickly dismisses his suspicion on the grounds that the group lacks a Moor in attendance, and he welcomes them as fellow conspirators. When they ask what they can do to help him, Titus pronounces their death sentence. He tells Murder and Rape to search the streets of Rome for persons similar to themselves and kill them. To Tamora he says:

Go thou with them, and in the Emperor's court  
There is a queen attended by a Moor:  
Well shalt thou know her by thine proportion,  
For up and down she doth resemble thee.  
I pray thee, do on them some violent death:  
They have been violent to me and mine.  

(108-113)
Surely Titus is aware of what he is doing; he has given his enemies every opportunity to remove themselves from the bizarre charade. Unwitting though they be, they have consented to their deaths at the direction of Titus. Thus, the future action of Titus has received at least an implicit approval from his victims.

Tamora pledges her support in the action and then engages Titus in planning a solemn banquet at which all will "stoop and kneel" (line 122) and plead for Titus's mercy. A very special stage direction is often overlooked at this juncture. It is contained in the dialogue itself. Tamora has presented to Titus the plan for making all who have injured him beg for mercy at a solemn feast. She concludes her plan with, "What says Andronicus to this device" (line 124). Very obviously, Titus does not respond to the question. Rather, he calls for Marcus to send word to Lucius of the feast. Titus is not interested in anyone stooping to him and asking for his forgiveness. In keeping with his character, he rejects Tamora's request for mercy a second time. Titus has more important things to do than concern himself with his own injuries. He has already suffered and reconciled himself to a more cosmic purpose: saving Rome.

Then Titus tricks Tamora into leaving her two sons behind:

Nay, nay, let Rape and Murder stay with me;  
Or else I'll call my brother back again  
And cleave to no revenge but Lucius.

(138-140)
Tamora takes her sons aside and advises them to stay with Titus and humor his madness. Titus meanwhile remarks to himself that his supposed madness will yet bring him victory and them destruction. The following exchange of dialogue is supremely Shakespearean in its wit and irony at this point.

Tam. Farewell, Andronicus. Revenge now goes To lay a complot to betray thy foes.
Titus. I know thou dost, and, sweet Revenge, farewell!

Exit Tamora.

Chir. Tell us, old man, how shall we be employed?
Titus. Tut, I have worked enough for you to do.

Titus could not possibly have known such an opportunity would present itself. He did not have to descend to the dark corners of the forest for sacrifice as did his enemies; the sacrifice has come to him. He orders the brothers to be gagged and bound. He exits amidst a babble of confusion as the masquers insist upon their true identity. As he leaves, he says to his own men:

Oft have you heard me wish for such an hour, And now I find it:

Exit.

Publius, etc., lay hold on Chiron and Demetrius.

It must be noted that immediately preceeding his exit Titus has insisted on speaking of Demetrius and Chiron as Murder and Rape. The abstractions of evil were ordered to be bound and gagged, not the brothers. It is a subtle but important distinction which becomes clear in Titus's next
speech.

Enter Titus Andronicus with a knife and Lavinia with a basin.

He enters as a celebrant of the gods; his is a human function with a divine efficacy in the supreme ritual action of the play. He is controlled, rational, and solemn as he addresses the victims. Now he calls them by their real names and shreds any semblance of a masquerade:

O villains, Chiron and Demetrius!
Here stands the spring whom you have stained with mud,
This goodly summer with your winter mixed.
(179-181)

Titus has accepted his responsibility to right the wrongs of Rome. He reminds Demetrius and Chiron of their sins and the inescapable punishment they must undergo to appease the gods for what they have done. In telling them of the precise details connected with their death, he compounds the ritual element of the scene and creates the illusion that all sacrifice participates in the same procedures:

I will grind your bones to dust
And with your blood and it I'll make a paste
And of the paste a coffin I will rear,
And make two pasties of your shameful heads:
And bid that strumpet, your unhallowed dam,
Like to the Earth, swallow her own increase.
(196-201)

Then immediately before the ritual murder, Titus addresses all those present:

Come, come, be everyone officious
To make this banquet, which I may prove
More stern and bloody than the Centaurs' feast.
(211-213)
Titus obviously saw his duty as an "officious" one, one that he could neither avoid nor delegate, but still a duty that required communal participation. The concelebration lifts the murder rite to a universal stature. His speech also shows that he has projected himself into the framework of ancient mythology. He joins himself and Rome to the Rome of the past with allusions to Procne and Philomel while his own Philomel serves the function of acolyte to his ministry. The horror of the moment brings to mind an analogous action on the part of Aeneas, who was forced to kill Turnus as part of his mission in founding Rome. Titus must kill in order to save Rome.

There is a note of Fate present in the proceedings. Above all else there is the note of sadness in Titus's speech. He lists the victim's crimes not just for their sake but also for his. He must affirm for himself that they deserve to die. It is also an unaccustomed action for him to kill an opponent bound and gagged. He has spent a lifetime pursuing enemies on the open battlefield. For Titus then can be heard the Virgilian cry that there are tears in things. Such is the bitter sweetness of mortal triumph. The analogy between Titus and Aeneas is complete.

In this scene Shakespeare completes his portrait of Titus. Until now, Titus has verged on caricature, abstraction, or allegory. Here he emerges as the ideal of the good man, who presses on through life's pain and sorrow.
He approaches the Stoical ideal put forward by Zeno of Citium, founder of the Stoics (c. 300 B.C.). It is no wonder that Titus speaks for all ages in his commitment to virtue. The Stoic ideal blends with the Christian's progress to perfection, and Titus reaches the heights of pietic perfection when he descends to the level of his enemies. He has come to realize like Aeneas that "right must be done despite misgivings."\(^7\) Like Aeneas also, Titus has harnessed his sufferings and his Stoic ideal to the cause of Roman fortune. He has made a crucial discovery and acted upon it. The rest is epilogue.

The speech to the brothers has more than just a poetic or dramatic significance. There is evidence in historical documents of Rome that human sacrifice was often accompanied by the eating of the victim's flesh.\(^8\) Moreover, Titus was reverting to the essence of pietic duty by giving the murderers a fitting coffin and an internment in a most appropriate place. Some have tended to call this touch an example of gallows' humor. That hardly seems to be the intention if viewed through Titus's eyes: he has begun the process whereby Rome will be rid of evil. He is preparing a solemn feast at which Saturn will eat his own children. The Saturnalian cycle will be complete, and Rome can return to normal.

He cuts their throats.

\(^7\)Grant, *Myths of the Greeks and Romans*, p. 294.

There are few more gory moments in all of Shakespeare, and some critics have insisted on staging the throat-slitting scene offstage. Shakespeare was probably more astute than the critics have given him credit for being. The staging of this ritual murder must be preserved onstage in the presence of the audience. It is the symbol of triumph for the forces of good and the occasion for the dramatic release necessary to assuage the audience's vicarious suffering. To cheat the audience of such a theatrical moment would be tantamount to denying the efficacy of Titus's actions. The scene would end on a purely poetic note and the thesis-antithesis construction would be broken for the first time in the play. If the audience is permitted to see the ravaged Lavinia and the mutilated Titus, it should be permitted to see the bleeding Goths.

Exeunt, bearing the dead bodies.
Scene III. Court of Titus' house. A banquet set out.

Enter Lucius, Marcus, and the Goths
with Aaron prisoner.

In his epilogue to the story of Titus, Shakespeare presents one last picture of the transforming power of pietas. His last scene shows that pietic virtue has transformed Rome into what she was at the beginning of the play, a city victorious in her mourning weeds. This last scene provides the final death spasm required to set Rome on a new journey toward a golden age. Characteristically, Shakespeare opens the scene with an act of pietas. Lucius pays his filial respects to Titus's Rome:

Uncle Marcus, since 'tis my father's mind That I repair to Rome I am content. (1-2)

Then Lucius reveals why he has kept Aaron alive; he will use him as evidence against Tamora because he fears the Emperor's evil intentions. Aaron's words to Lucius indicate further that the Moor has escaped any influence of pietas. If anything, he is worse than before he was unmasked. He no longer has need of pretense:

Some devil whisper curses in my ear, And prompt me that my tongue may utter forth The venomous malice of my swelling heart. (11-13)

A confrontation between Lucius and Aaron is decidedly awkward at this point: its inclusion in the scene would seem to be an indication that Lucius will not easily be rid of the forces of evil in Rome. The argument is cut short by the Emperor's trumpets.
Sound trumpets. Enter Emperor Saturninus and Tamora, with Aemilius, Tribunes, Senators, and others.

All of Rome has been assembled for the parley between Lucius and Saturninus. Immediately Lucius and Saturninus quarrel; there is no mask of political pretense here. Marcus intervenes and persuades them to delay the argument. His persuasive words ring with the love of Rome:

These quarrels must be quietly debated.
The feast is ready which the careful Titus Hath ordained to an honorable end,
For peace, for love, for league and good to Rome.
Please you, therefore, draw nigh and take your places.

(21-25)

Marcus begins the final scene as he began the play, ameliorating between two contestants for the control of Rome. The verdict must await the solemn feast.

Enter Titus, like a Cook, placing the dishes, and Lavinia with a veil over her face, young Lucius, and others.

The parallel to Titus's entrance in Act I must be mentioned. Titus now enters from a different kind of war in which he has conquered the same Goths as earlier. The pastries he carries are his adopted sons under a new dispensation; by his pietic act to save Rome, he has made Demetrius and Chiron adopted children of the nation. They have entered the ranks of the Roman heroes by an alternate door. They, as Titus said earlier, are martyrs. Lavinia enters veiled; she will remain dutifully in the background until her time, just as in Act I. Young Lucius replaces his father. The stage is set for a solemn feast or a ritual burial. In either case,
the play has come full circle.

Polite small talk fills the air as Titus explains his reason for dressing as a cook. His speech is cloaked with irony and wit. He wishes to make sure that all is well in the entertainment of the Emperor and Empress. Tamora is more than gracious in her thankfulness. The masks of politeness and courtesy are again all in place, and the final agony is about to begin. Titus directs his conversation to the story of the fifth century centurion, Virginius, who killed his daughter because she was ravished by her abductor. Titus asks the Emperor why Virginius was correct in killing Virginia. Saturninus's response triggers the bloodshed:

Because the girl should not survive her shame
And by her presence still renew his sorrows.

(44-45)

It is the perfect pietic response, and Titus has received implicitly an imperial sanction to kill Lavinia.

He kills her.

Then in quick succession he feeds Tamora her sons and kills her "eating the flesh that she herself hath bred" (line 67). The stage swirls in a dance of death as Saturninus kills Titus and Lucius joins the melee.

Kills Saturninus. A great tumult. Lucius, Marcus, and others go up into the balcony.

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Virginius actually killed his daughter before she was ravished to prevent her from undergoing the horrendous experience.
In one quick motion, Shakespeare has cleared the stage for a new Rome to rise on the graves of the old. Before the new Rome is permitted to speak, several things should be made clear about the agonies of the old participants. Here was quick dispatch. No rhetoric filled the air; no dissembling delayed the inevitable. Much has been said about the helter skelter tumble of bodies in this final scene; generally it is found lacking in taste. But the startlingly quick killing of Lavinia, Tamora, Saturninus, and Titus achieves a special theatrical integrity. The contestants have departed so quickly that in retrospect the audience little remembers or cares about their deaths. Their stature as living beings remains long after their deaths. That is as it should be in tragedy. Moreover, for the sake of the tragedy, Titus had to be sacrificed also.

In keeping with the theme of natural pietas, Shakespeare also cleverly legalized all the killing in the final scene. Saturninus sanctioned or confirmed Titus's right to kill Lavinia. Further, Titus was completely within the law when he killed Tamora. She had violated the Lex Julia de adulteriis, a Roman law (c. 17 B.C.) which established the death penalty for adultery. As Emperor, Saturninus had no other choice but to kill Titus. Lucius's legal right to kill Saturninus was also guaranteed by the same law mentioned

above. It decreed death to the complacent husband.

Then Marcus calls upon Rome to look to him for help:

You sad-faced men, people and sons of Rome,
By uproars severed, as a flight of fowl
Scattered by winds and high tempestuous gusts,
Oh, let me teach you to knit again
This corn into one mutual sheaf,
These broken limbs again into one body;

(72-77)

Unfortunately, Marcus has shown throughout the play that he
does not have the strength or the ability to fulfill his promise. Even his appeal to age and experience seem to have no effect on the crowd. Then, as if aware of his folly, he turns to Lucius and asks him to speak in defense of the Andronici:

Speak, Rome's dear friend, as erst our ancestor,
When with his solemn tongue he did discourse
To lovesick Dido's sad attending ear
The story of that baleful burning night
When subtle Greeks surprised King Priam's Troy:

(85-89)

The mythological analogy recurs again with a new Aeneas in the person of Lucius. He speaks to a new Rome much as Aeneas spoke to a New Troy. In his speech he recounts, Aeneas-like, his lists of deeds and woes that make him acceptable to the throne. He justifies himself by the evidence of his own piety when he concludes: "For when no friends are by, men praise themselves" (line 124). Lucius's words could easily be understood to be those of Shakespeare speaking to his own country, for nowhere else outside Rome would an audience have been more susceptible for moralizing at such a time.

For centuries the English had prided themselves on being
descendants of Aeneas's grandson Brutus. Popular history and literature frequently referred to London as New Troy and Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queen* included the legend of Trojan settlement of England. Two of the earliest English historians attest to the Trojan settlement of England: Nennius (c. 826) and Geoffrey of Monmouth (Twelfth Century). In his *History of the Kings of Britain*, Geoffrey represents "Caesar as saying, 'We Romans and these Britains be of one ancestry, for we also do comne of Trojan stock.'"

As almost an afterthought, Marcus reminds those present of Aaron and his child as symbols of evil against whom the Andronici fought. It is his final argument to persuade the people of Rome to accept Lucius as their Emperor. The Romans accept and Lucius descends to the banquet room as "Rome's gracious governor" (line 152). His title suggests that he will be less imperial than any of the other monarchs mentioned in the play.

Lucius brings the play to a conclusion with a series of seemingly contradictory actions. His first is an important act of piety to his dead father.

*But, gentle people, give me aim awhile,*  
*For nature puts me to a heavy task.*  
*Stand all aloof, but, uncle draw you near*  
*To shed obsequious tears upon this trunk.*  
*Oh, take this warm kiss on thy pale cold lips,*

---

Kissing Titus.

These sorrowful drops upon thy bloodstained face,
The last true duties of thy noble son!
(155-162)

Marcus follows suit and then both he and Lucius lead forward
the Young Lucius to pay his respects in like manner. The
young boy is overwhelmed with the emotions of the occasion:

O grandsire, grandsire! ev'n with all my heart
Would I were dead, so you did live again
O Lord, I cannot speak to him for weeping;
My tears will choke me, if I ope my mouth.
(180-183)

Pietas has been handed down.

Enter Attendants with Aaron.

Lucius performs his first official function as Emperor. He
orders Aaron to be buried breast deep in the earth and starved.
Anyone who takes pity on him will also die. The spark of the
dead Titus burns brightly in Lucius, but the young Emperor
has forgotten the child of Aaron. Evil has propogated itself
successfully in Rome for Lucius has also inherited the
apolitical innocence of his father.

Then Lucius instructs fitting burial for Saturninus,
Lavinia, and Titus. He will grant even the wicked Emperor
his due as a Roman; however, he has no mercy or piety for
Tamora:

As for that ravenous tiger, Tamora,
No funeral rite, nor man in mourning weed,
No mournful bell shall ring her burial;
But throw her forth to beasts and birds of prey.
Her life was beastly and devoid of pity.
And, being dead, let birds on her take pity.
(205-210)
The play ends on a chilling note. **Pietas** does not extend to all in Lucius's Rome. There rests the difference between him and Titus. As a former Empress of Rome, Tamora deserves the same burial rights as the rest. Lucius's decision concerning Tamora raises several profound questions: has he really restored harmony and order to Rome? and is he prepared to face the consequences for his violation of Roman pietas? The answers to these questions lie outside the play.
CONCLUSION

It has been the intention of this study neither to disprove the findings of earlier scholars nor to be argumentative but rather to render Titus Andronicus more aesthetically pleasing and theatrically effective by viewing it through the prism of pietas. With the acceptance of the argument for pietas, it is apparent that Titus emerges as a more than interesting piece of dramaturgy. It can be seen to have its own style, tone, and dramatic structure, truly distinct and essentially non-derivative from any other extant individual piece of theatre. In addition, the argument for pietas as its animating motivation clearly makes it significantly more than a Senecan revenge tragedy or a popular melodrama. Complimentary to the findings about the play in previous studies, certain additional conclusions can now be drawn about the aesthetic and theatrical integrity of Titus. Many of those conclusions have been rather evident throughout the course of the dissertation, but they will be specifically delineated here in summary.

Structurally, the play indicates that serious attention was paid to the arrangement of its various parts. There is little merit to previous complaints that the play is a hodgepodge of stage tricks and melodramatic action. By the
consistency of pietic action, the use of the thesis-antithesis motif, and the rigid adherence to the cause-effect relationship in the reversals and discoveries, the play shows the hand of a master technician. Even the occasionally awkward transitions or confused time sequences can be viewed as deliberate conventions justified by theatrical tradition or contemporary practices. Most important is the place of pietas in the structural formation of the plot. It is difficult to accept any other action motif as the principal cause of the play's action. That is not to deny the role that revenge plays in Titus; rather, pietas provides a necessary thesis for its antithesis, revenge. The presence of pietas satisfies an aesthetic need for ethical or moral integrity in the tragic hero and provides multidimensional characterization. In doing so, pietas preserves Titus from the charge of being melodramatic in both plot and characterization.

Whether the theatrical conventions of the tableaux vivants and the Rederyker plays were consciously considered in the composition of Titus or in its early productions cannot be proven. But the fact that those conventions were both known and used in the time of Shakespeare provides a convincing argument against those who dismiss the play as a broken-down cart lumbering across the stage laden with the mutilated bodies of its participants. The tradition of the theme play, allegorical in content and in style, certainly allows Titus to lay claim to some degree of literary and philosophical
integrity. The fustian language has a place issuing as it does from the lips of the characters who occasionally appear to be merely political, ethical, or social types. The medieval morality play survives beneath the main action of Titus Andronicus, and the ceremonies and pageant-like sweep of the play almost demand the spectacular staging characteristic of the tableaux.

Other conclusions about the play depend upon an understanding of the important Elizabethan tradition that the poet, playwright, and historian were often considered political high priests who had accepted responsibility for the preservation of political and moral virtue in the commonwealth. As stated earlier, E. M. Tillyard established the same argument for Richard III and Henry V by basing his case in great measure on The Mirror for Magistrates. Rejected for the moment as a Roman play, Titus easily qualifies as a serious attempt to make a political and ethical statement about late sixteenth century English life expressed in terms of Roman myth and Western philosophical traditions.

Titus Andronicus has all of the ingredients necessary to qualify as a political statement to Elizabethan England fresh from her victories against the Spanish, aware of almost two generations of civil strife at home, and apprehensive of the future because of an aging and heirless queen. The presentation of a Roman tragedy with mythological and planetary allusions that are analogous to elements in British
history and literature cannot be considered an accident of artistry. As an early, if not the first, play of a young aspiring playwright, Titus ranks with Spenser's Faerie Queene in the glorification of the English heritage. The parallels are striking:

Spenser pictures the golden age of Elizabeth as the providential consummation of the vast process that had its beginnings in the remote and fabulous past when the Trojans landed in Britain and subdued its giant-brood.¹

In Spenser "the age of Elizabeth is golden, corresponding to the dawning of a great year when all the heavenly bodies have returned to their rightful position in the universe."² Shakespeare's Titus is not that generous; it glorifies the English heritage, past and present, with a warning. In his neo-Trojan Rome that so clearly symbolizes Elizabethan England, Shakespeare is free to talk about romanitas, pietas, Machiavellian virtu and the course of honor necessary for personal and political greatness. In fact, Rome was Shakespeare's safest platform from which to speak his moral, especially a theatrical Rome created from its metaphysical center rather than from historical fact. Shakespeare's message is ominous: the disturbance of the hierarchical order of the universe can lead only to chaos; and "in the end order and the natural law will reassert themselves"³ even if

¹Tillyard, Shakespeare's History Plays, p. 31.
²Ibid., p. 32.
³Ibid., p. 23.
kings, queens, and princes must be destroyed in the process.

It is difficult to deny Shakespeare's message, especially since it emanates from three sources synthesized into one dramatic construct: the romanitas admired by Elizabethans, the Trojan analogy that "frequently served as the great exemplar of the realm of England,"⁴ and the popular astrological tradition of the sixteenth century. Specifically, the characters in Titus serve as exemplars for political virtue and vice with the potential for tragic misery or greatness. Saturninus, Tamora, and Aaron follow the same paths that led previous English rulers to the Tower. Elizabeth herself knew the fickleness of political fortune. In the person of Titus, Shakespeare has created a suitable model of the tragic figure concerned for the destiny of his world and beset by the dilemma of ethical action or expedient passivity. Titus chooses to act to preserve human and divine justice and dies in his efforts. Perhaps the most telling stroke in the creation of the play and its protagonist is the use of virtuous acts of pietas to create the dilemma. A further message can be deduced from this: even noble action can contain within itself the seeds of tragedy for the individual and the state. In the resolution of its action, the play illustrates not only the need for, but also the

cruelty of, disinterested virtue.

*Titus* concludes with a young Lucius motivated by a dual political strength: Roman *pietas* and Machiavellian *virtu*. He is well aware of the impossibility or efficacy of totally virtuous action. The ultimate message is grim and stark in its fatalism: man is doomed to take action with no hope of success. Gilbert Highet characterizes that Shakespearean quality in the following manner:

*Shakespeare’s great tragedies are dominated by a hopeless fatalism which is far more pessimistic than the purifying agonies of Greek tragedy, and almost utterly godless. None of them shows any belief in the ‘righteous government of the world’ except in so far as successful evildoers are later punished for their own cruel schemes. Sometimes his tragic heroes speak of life as ruled by fate inhuman, unpredictable, and meaningless; but sometimes, more bitterly, cry out against vicious mankind which is unfit to live, and cruel gods who ‘kill us for their sport’. That much of this hopeless gloom came from Shakespeare’s own heart, no one can doubt; but he found it expressed decisively and eloquently in the Stoical pessimism of Seneca.*

Highet might well have been speaking of *Titus* specifically.

*Titus Andronicus* has structural failings and occasional lapses of style. The mistakes in the play, however, are a result of introducing too much unshaped material onto one framework. But there is no need to apologize for *Titus* or William Shakespeare’s craftsmanship. It seems safe to conclude that much of the negative criticism springs from an overly

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5Highet, *Classical Tradition*, p. 207.
sensitive aesthetic sense of theatrical decorum. Such criticism, which began with Ravenscroft, has continued to the present.

The London *Daily Express* reported on 24 October, 1955 that two complaints had arrived at the Stratford Memorial Theatre, where Brook's production of *Titus* was playing. The newspaper report summed them up as follows:

No. 1 is from a woman who wrote a poem condemning the Stratford production. She is sending a copy to the Archbishop of Canterbury.
No. 2 is from a Shakespeare lover who 'just cannot believe Shakespeare ever wrote anything so horrible and disgusting."

The best defense against such reactions may well be found in Shakespeare's own words:

> Oh, why should nature build so foul a den,
> Unless the gods delight in tragedies?
> (4. 1. 64-65)

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