

# Representations of the Raped Lavinia in *Titus Andronicus*: Visual Pleasures/Tragedy in Male/Female Gaze

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## Introduction

### —Rape as Male Pleasure/Female Tragedy: A Cultural and Historical Look at Lavinia—

The purpose of this paper is to investigate how rape in *Titus Andronicus* (1592?–1594?) has been represented on stage and film in the second part of the twentieth century. Among William Shakespeare's works, this bloody Roman tragedy that contains rape as well human sacrifice, cannibalism and infanticide can be defined as his most gruesome play. Furthermore, these horrific and subversive elements led his first tragedy to be the most despised play in the canon. Therefore, the play's stage history and/or popularity can function as a measure to read the capacity and tendency for sensationalism of each age. Even though it seems well received by Elizabethan audiences who were evidently fascinated by revenge plays, there is no trace of any performance between 1614 and 1642. After the Restoration, only Edward Ravenscroft's adaptation, *Titus Andronicus: or, the Rape of Lavinia*, was recorded between 1687 and 1724. Since then only radical adaptations were seldom performed on stage. Thus, Shakespeare's text was generally neglected for some three hundred years probably due to the difficulty in representing problematic scenes, in particular, the post-rape of Lavinia (II.iii).<sup>3</sup>

Rape is a violation of sexual autonomy and the negation of human subjectivity, yet the meaning of 'rape' itself is a controversial issue and can be regarded as a socio-cultural product. Concerning the ethics of rape, notable gaps are often found between female sensibilities and attitudes and those of male. If patriarchy controls human systems, then it is not surprising that a heterosexual male perspective is dominant in the definition and representation of rape.<sup>4</sup> In fact, the word 'rape', which originates from the Latin *raptus*, meaning robbery, signified (according to the *OED* definition<sup>5</sup>) the theft of a woman from her father or husband regardless of her volition this is different from the modern usage which denotes sexual violence against an individual's will. As a result, in the Renaissance era, the subjectivity of the victim was generally disregarded. Besides, rape was concealed because of the shame of female victims and their families and thereby rarely reported to the authorities. This ambiguous female position as patriarchal property created ideological and ethical debates in both real and fictional worlds. The theme of rape multiplied in the literature and theatre of that age.<sup>6</sup>

The English Renaissance playhouses are generally regarded as intricate sites of desires, yet there is little consensus over historic evidence as to how the audience of that age perceived the plays.<sup>7</sup> The convention of transvestism may have functioned to remove female subjectivity and creativity from the domain of culture and entertainment, as Lesley Ferris supposes 'women had

absolutely no part in their own dramatic image-making' (1990: 3–19). On the other hand, there is a view that no plays could survive without appealing to the audience, which consisted of both men and women, therefore the boy actors functioned as the vehicles of not only male desires but also female ones.<sup>8</sup> From a different angle still Jill Dolan points out that 'all representation is inherently ideological. . . . Ideology circulates as a prevailing term in performance from its creation to its reception' (1988: 41). Based on her argument, I think that pleasures of seeing were more controlled within the male dominated structure and perspective of that age, and so men tended to be viewers and women tended to be objects.<sup>9</sup> For some audiences, the performances of man's imagined women/men through boys' bodies could have had erotic undertones and may even have stimulated fetishistic and voyeuristic desires.<sup>10</sup>

In spite of the differences in theatrical conventions, it is also explicit that there is some continuity between the early modern age and the contemporary age when you consider that the patriarchal socio-cultural hierarchy has not changed. The male oriented sexual representation is rather universal. In effect, circumstances surrounding female sexuality have not altered radically; especially in the case of rape which throughout history has continually bestowed fatal damage to women. The numerous examples of the female body, being exploited as the property of a nation, and sexual attack as a weapon and comfort of war are seen from ancient wars to the recent Kosovo crisis (Card, 1996: 5–17) and beyond. To make matters worse, after the victim has been through the trauma of the actual attack, she is made to go through a 'public' or 'second' rape in the process of accusation and interrogation (Heberle, 1996: 63–80). On the grounds that the significant spheres of law and media are still controlled by men, bodies and stories of female victims tend to be exposed and subjugated under the eyes of male authorities. Despite the growing awareness to women's rights, current cultural products still aid in propagating the notion that violence done to women is acceptable. Female bodies are being consumed in both real and virtual worlds, such as television, film and the Internet. At times the influence is so intense and prevailing that we overlook it. This suggests, even unconsciously, that we are manipulated by male oriented consumer culture. In this socio-cultural tendency, rape, a tragedy for women, can be one of the most sensational visual pleasures to men.

Turning now to *Titus Andronicus* in the twentieth century. The attempt by Robert Atkins to restore the original text in 1922 at the Old Vic failed due to the audience's unexpected burst of laughter in the last slaughter scene. In order to see a successful performance, the audience had to wait until Peter Brook's Stratford production in 1955. After this revival, there have been occasional renditions on stage or film. Nonetheless, it is far less frequently performed compared to other Shakespearean tragedies. Consequently, it is easy to point out the significant productions: Gerald Freedman in 1967 at the New York Shakespeare Festival; Trevor Nunn in 1972 (RSC); Paul Barry in 1977 at the New Jersey Shakespeare Festival; Brian Bedford in 1978 in Stratford, Ontario; John Barton in 1981 (RSC) as part of an experimental double bill with *The Two Gentleman of Verona*; Jane Howell in 1985 in the BBC Shakespeare series; Deborah Warner in 1987 (RSC); and Gregory Doran in 1995 at the Market Theatre in Johannesburg, which was also revived at the National Theatre in London. In addition, it is extraordinary that two films have been produced almost simultaneously at the turn of the century: directed by Christopher Dunne in 1999 and Julie Taymor in 2000. This phenomenon suggests that this

bloody revenge tragedy suits the atmosphere of the age and the taste of the contemporary audience.

For the purpose of discussion I want to put these productions into two categories according to their approaches towards violence: symbolism and realism, and thereafter examine how the raped Lavinia is represented in the light of textual alterations and theatrical representations. According to this categorization, the majority of male directors chose the former style, following Brook's stylised production. In contrast, both of the female directors, Howell and Warner, chose the latter; they preferred realistic and direct representations of the raped Lavinia. In the following chapters, I propose to analyse the productions listed above by making special references to the following scenes: Marcus's discovery of his niece (II.iii), Titus's treatment of his daughter (III.i, V.iii) and Lavinia's revenge on her rapists (V.ii). How do directors present and audiences receive these crucial scenes? How are female characters entrapped in patriarchal narrative? Other key issues that will be discussed are women's subjectivity and survival and their ways of defiance against stereotypical definitions of femininity, which are deeply connected with the patriarchal social and sexual politics of each age.

## I. Stylisation or Male Fantasy of Rape: Lavinia's Scarlet Ribbon

There is no doubt that the modern stage history of *Titus Andronicus* starts with Brook's monumental achievement at the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre in 1955.<sup>11</sup> Shakespeare's long despised play, which had never been performed in Stratford, turned into 'an austere and grim Roman tragedy, horrifying indeed, but with a real primitive strength at times a barbaric tragedy' (programme note) at the hands of a thirty year old star director. The audience, who had experienced the horrors of WWII ten years before, found reality in the stylised violence and were shaken to the extent that some fainted on the night as J. C. Trewin recorded:

'*Titus Andronicus*' came in on the night of August 16 to the most sustained roar of applause I remember in the Stratford theatre. . . . And for whom was this outcry? For Shakespeare, with (presumably) Peele, and the other collaborators? Hardly, I think. It was for Peter Brook, the director, who showed again that he has one of the most imaginative minds in the English theatre, and for Sir Laurence Olivier, who turned upon the despised part of Titus the full beam of his genius. (*The Illustrated London News*, 27 Aug. 1955: 357-58)

Brook's interpretation was expressed with precision through Olivier in the title role and through other actors such as: Maxine Audley as Tamora and Vivien Leigh as Lavinia. Reminiscing about the production Brook said, '*Titus Andronicus* was a *show*; . . . —the sound, the visual interpretation, everything interlocking, that made it happen', the director used all the theatrical artistry. He designed a 'sombre and huge' set, 'shadowy, smoky' lighting, silky costumes and composed primitive music (Beauman, 1982: 224-25). In consequence, the production was highly praised by reviewers; it achieved worldwide acclaim and had a strong impact on the subsequent directors.

However, Trewin's comment becomes connotative if the minor criticisms against Brook's adaptation of *Titus Andronicus* are taken into consideration. In order to adjust 'a ritual of bloodshed which was recognized as true' (Brook, 1972: 53) to the 1950s audience, Brook radically altered the original text by cutting Shakespeare's rhetoric: he reduced down the sensationalism and the ludicrous, which would evoke an unexpected response,<sup>12</sup> by eliminating about 650 lines. As a result, most of the bloody and grotesque moments were deliberately cut or transformed into alternative stylised representations. Therefore, the positive reviews of Brook's interpretation, that he re-created the play better than the original, could be read from a negative viewpoint. Take the opinion of Richard David for example, which becomes an ironical answer to Trewin's previous question: 'Has Shakespeare's *Titus* really any life in it? The question is not yet answered. Certainly Brook's romantic play of the same name was still-born' (1957: 128). In Brook's romantic and intensive tragedy, most of the bloody moments of murder, rape and mutilation were either formalized or carried out off-stage. Several gruesome objects, such as severed heads and Titus's hand, were covered up by the beautiful curtain or cloths. Under Brook's direction, actual violence tended to metamorphose into abstraction and was left to the imagination of the audience. Above all, it is notable that Brook beautified all the scenes where Leigh's Lavinia appeared. In particular, it is worth examining how the most 'pivotal' and atrocious scenes in the play,<sup>15</sup> the post-rape of Lavinia, were depicted. The entrance of the ravished but elegant Lavinia was the most striking moment in the whole performance. Instead of a bloody and sinister figure, Leigh was 'Beauty disfigured' (*Times*, 2 July 1957: 8). Ivor Brown also describes that 'Brook's method was to drain off the rivers of gore, never to parade the knife-work, and, instead, to symbolise a wound with a scarlet ribbon' (1956: 10). In Brook's visual stylisation, Lavinia appeared in an abstract forest dragging the scarlet velvet ribbons from her wrists and mouth. The ravished daughter was portrayed not as a 'martyr' but as a present from the Goths to the Andronici with the bloody ribbon. This image suggested her lack of humanity; the Roman maid was valuable property for the men and the sexual object of male revenge. Moreover, it is notable that Marcus's (Alan Webb) long lines to his maimed niece were completely cut. Instead the scene was accompanied by harp harmonics followed by piano just like a lovely operatic aria (Trewin, 1971: 87 and Kennedy, 1993: 170) in order to convey the tragic fate and pain of the woman. As a result of not only audio-visual ritualisation but also verbal formalisation, the most grotesque scene in the original text was transformed into a melancholic dumb show: 'Enter C [centre] Lavinia stands desolate', no Marcus, and hence no verbal response, and within a very short time 'Demetrius [Lee Montague] and Chiron [Kevin Miles] slowly close the column doors meeting C.'<sup>16</sup>

Concerning this stylised image of sexual abuse, reviewers' opinions were divided; although most of them praised Brook's innovation, some critics like David were extremely suspicious about his style: 'It was certainly in keeping, and added a crowning touch of fantasy to a most fantastical invention. It was the whole, however, the one extended conjuring-trick, that held the spectator spell-bound— spell-bound and yet quite unmoved. . . . The blood was, we have seen, turned to favours and to prettiness' (David, 1957: 134). Brook's overly romantic expression of the ravished and maimed woman, or his intentional misrepresentation of it, evokes the principal question again: what was Shakespeare's intention in the juxtaposition of the Senecan gory

presence and in the Ovidian and/or Petrarchan artificial narrative? In effect, many critics have argued over this problematic scene and some read young Shakespeare's experiments 'to make art out of violence' (Barnet, 1964: xxxiii) by adapting the poetic conventions, such as baroque *tirade* and 'voyeuristic' *blazon* used in *The Rape of Lucrece* (1594), to the stage.<sup>17</sup>

If, as argued by Laura Mulvey, the image of a woman is the centre of patriarchal perspective and 'pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female', this scene can provide pleasure that arises from scopophilia. Lavinia stands not for the realities of female tragedy but for the signifier of the male other or male 'pleasure of looking'. Hence 'women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote to-be-looked-at-ness' (1992: 27). In the case of Brook's visual narrative, Leigh's beautifully ravished Lavinia has no subjectivity, like a puppet<sup>18</sup>; the unwilling victim is fetished and made into a passive sex object for the rapists and the observer. Therefore it is suggestive that Brook's Demetrius and Chiron retreated from Lavinia looking back at her with their taunts and Marcus stared at her without words for a while. While the tragic heroine is displayed as a spectacle, the male audience identifies with the male villains or heroes as they advance the narrative and also become an object of ego identification for them. Despite the difference between plays and films, it is reasonable to read Brook's direction further in the light of his 'gaze'. Because he started his career with the belief that the theatre is an iconographic art: 'I wanted to bring to life, just like making a film' (Brook, 1987: 78). Relevant to the scopophilic pleasure in Brook's 'barbaric ritual' (Brook, 1972: 106) is Mulvey's following remark:

This second avenue, fetishistic scopophilia, builds up the physical beauty of the object, transforming it into something satisfying in itself. The first avenue, voyeurism, on the contrary, has associated with sadism: pleasure lies in ascertaining guilt (immediately associated with castration), asserting control and subjugating the guilty person through punishment or forgiveness. This sadistic side fits in well with narrative. Sadism demands a story, depends on making something happen, forcing a change in another person, a battle of will and strength, victory/defeat, all occurring in a linear time with a beginning and an end. Fetishistic scopophilia, on the other hand, can exist outside linear time as the erotic instinct is focused on the look alone (1992: 29).

There is a suggestion here that these ambiguities, contradictions and continuities of two types of scopophilia can be illustrated in this scene. In terms of the voyeuristic view, it is obvious that the murder, rape and mutilation are connected to extreme sadism on the plea of revenge. As if they support Mulvey's idea, the rapists justify the brutal retaliation in their macabre and coarse rhetoric. They then castrate their object sexually and linguistically; the maid is deflowered and her tongue and hands are severed. Moreover, what is noteworthy in Brook's visual adaptation is that the sadistic situation was portrayed in an aesthetic style as well as erotic. As if a pretty doll in melancholia, Leigh was not bleeding but decorated with the scarlet ribbon; like a sensational portrait, the male characters and the audience gazed at her with sadistic pleasure. Through the male fetishistic scopophilia that detects the physical beauty of the object, the ravished and lopped

Lavinia is transformed into a shocking delight. Therefore, Mulvey's two avenues of scopophilia, voyeurism and fetishism, or male desire and fantasy function to make rape sadistic and romantic simultaneously, and are brought together in Brook's tableau. In this crucial scene, the pretty and submissive daughter never shows revenge for her physical and mental violation.

Brook's direction in V.ii is another typical example. Since Chiron and Demetrius were murdered off-stage like in the adaptation of Ravenscroft, Brook's Lavinia did not even hold a basin to catch their blood. Thus, her grotesque images of vengeance were deliberately eliminated as well as the variety of violence and murder: 'there was no visual gore' (Beauman, 1982: 225). These dreadful activities were hidden behind the curtain and then the beautified stature of Lavinia simply functioned as a spectacle. Leigh was elegant and somehow narcissistic even after the extreme humiliation, thereby foiling the pleasures of looking. She was literally one of the 'passive, invisible, unspoken subjects' (Dolan, 1988: 2) before the theatrical male authorities<sup>19</sup>: the director, performers, like 'unrivalled' Olivier who passionately played Titus's patriarchal dignity and indignation or critics, like Kenneth Tynan who dedicated most of his space to praise Brook and Olivier.<sup>20</sup> To conclude, Leigh's Lavinia was an aesthetic sexualised puppet in respect to Brook's stylised theatre of violence and horrors.

It is useful to quote from Brown again in order to reconsider Brook's dramaturgy that eliminated subversive elements in the original: 'Peter Brook's production had been a masterpiece of salvage and a display of extreme cunning in the art of covering up' (1956: 11). It was obvious why Brook was successful in rescuing this most disgusting and despised play: the visual and linguistic manipulation of Shakespeare's sensationalism. Brook's aesthetic and technique, or 'secret play' beneath the text (Hunt, 1995: 16), suited 'the violent sub-conscious' (Brook, 1972: 106) of the 1950s as he asserted: 'my conviction was that the director's job having found an affinity between himself and play, was to find the images that he believed in and through them make the play live for a contemporary audience' (Brook, 1987: 78). It is implied in these quotes that his directing style was connected to the sexual ideology of that age. Hence the unnatural image of Lavinia's response to rape in his '*show*' would have been the reflection of male consciousness or the reproduction of patriarchal norms to some extent.<sup>21</sup>

Furthermore, it is interesting how *Titus Andronicus* had been performed since this monumental rebirth. The tendency to conceal the physical and linguistic violence is easily found in the post-Brook productions by subsequent male directors. For instance, Freedman's direction in 1967 is a good illustration of this. Dessen recorded it in the following terms: 'Lavinia's mutilation was displayed not through blood but by means of blood-red ribbons dangling from her wrists or stumps and a third ribbon that streamed out when she opened her mouth to speak to Marcus (a moment that elicited gasps from the audience)' (1988: 27). Lavinia's scarlet ribbons were used in just the same way as Brook. After one decade, Barry used a similar theatrical technique. The followers of Brook share common aspects not only in the stylised visual representation of rape and blood, but also in the cutting of the original lines. In particular, the omission of Marcus's speech of 47 lines when he finds the raped Lavinia. Just the same as Brook, Bedford completely omitted it in his 1978 production. Nunn cut about half of it and Barton did it even more in his excessively experimental one-hour *Titus Andronicus* as part of a double bill with *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* in 1981. Why was this scene cut and altered so

often by these directors? According to Dessen, they needed to ‘tame the beast, to translate what appeared to be Shakespearean overkill or overwriting into our idiom’ (1989: 57). The raped Lavinia or rape itself is too subversive and problematic to represent on the stage. Accordingly, it was necessary for them to translate the original into their abstraction. These efforts at re-writing and re-construction can be called cover-ups of Shakespearean atrocities, or escapes from the Elizabethan sensibilities. This also shows the predominance of the male directors in altering the original text.

Different from these male directors, Nunn and Doran chose to stage *Titus Andronicus* ‘realistically’. Nonetheless, the critical attitudes to both performances were greatly mixed. Most of the negative opinions arise once again due to the difficulties in representing the barbarism of the play. Let us start with a simple observation of Nunn’s RSC production in 1972, which was performed as part of ‘the Romans’, preceded by *Coriolanus*, *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra*. In this extensive project, the director who at 28 succeeded Peter Hall’s position, tried to create something revolutionary through the basis of the RSC’s ‘radical’ identity as a ‘basic[ally] left wing organization’ (Nunn and David Jones, letter to *The Times*, 5 Dec. 1972: 17, qtd. in Macdonald, 1993: 188) and his belief in ‘a socially concerned theatre’ (Addenbrooke, 1974: 182).<sup>22</sup> Nunn, who was not satisfied with Brook’s stylised rendition, chose to direct *Titus Andronicus* ‘realistically’ exploring the cultural and political status as a criticism of twentieth century civilization. Through his political rendition, the director visually challenged Brook’s apolitical symbolism and rebelled against the canon by purposely ‘misreading’ it and cutting the lines in the name of contemporary relevance. His directorial choices can be read in relation to what Harold Bloom calls ‘the anxiety of influence’ (1997); being feared by the precursors’ originality, the director commanded all the devices of the production to establish his own vision. The productions exaggerated his strengths, such as his talent to orchestrate epic spectacles like the Roman orgy scenes under the strong influence of Federico Fellini’s film *Fellini Satyricon*. On the other hand, it exposed some of his weakness as a ‘political’ director, such as ‘a certain tabloid taste for hammering home facile points’ (Beauman, 1982: 316).

It is worth looking at how Nunn had intended to depict the post-rape of Lavinia ‘naturalistically’ in accordance to his concern for current political issues. Reviewers on the whole, had negative attitudes to his modern presentation of *Titus Andronicus* as well as his basic concept of the Roman series as ‘assertive demonstrations of repressive authoritarianism’ (Beauman, 1982: 315).<sup>23</sup> Take the review of Michael Billington as a representative reaction:

To a large extent, this transformation is accomplished through a lingering, slow-motion realism. Where Brook presented the violence symbolically, Mr. Nunn gives it naturalistic weight and stress: the raped, tongueless Lavinia, for instance, here becomes a pitiable, hunched grotesque crawling out of darkness like a wounded animal and even moments like Titus’s severance of his own hand are deprived of their crude sensationalism by the stress of the sheer physical difficulty of the action (*The Guardian*, 13 Oct. 1972: 13–14).

It is interesting to find a unanimous preference for Brook’s barbaric ritual in the reviewers of

whom the great majority are men. The voices of female critics are limited but seem to have more variety.<sup>24</sup> Wendy Monk found ‘a moment of beauty’ when ‘she [Janet Suzman] transforms Lavinia from radiant girl to old woman, hump-backed, almost crawling’ (*Stratford-upon-Avon Herald*, 20 Oct. 1972; qtd. in Dessen, 1989: 39). In comparison, Sarah Eily Wood observed that the ‘humiliation of her crouching body is to some extent belied by the passion in her eyes’ (*Stage and Television Today*, 19 Oct. 1972). These opposite opinions show differences and ambiguities in the female perception of sexual violence. They reacted not only to the theatrical representation but also to the reality of rape itself through the body of the female actor. Moreover, Germaine Greer objected to Nunn’s realism or ‘morass of irrelevancy’. She critically responded to Nunn’s statement that ‘A girl is raped, her tongue cut out. It happens on the American sidewalk everyday’ (Tierney, 1972: 26): ‘In falling for such gutter press sensationalism Trevor Nunn loses his chance of dealing sensibly with this play, in which not only do extravagant concepts of violence appear, but people utter extravagantly figured verse in response to them, something that never happens today even in America’ (Greer, 1972: 40). The words ‘extravagant’ and ‘extravagantly’ are important in this context, because they can be read as criticism not only on Nunn’s production concept but also on his ‘patriarchal control over the apparatus of production’ (Macdonald, 1993: 191). Using his absolute power as Artistic Director, he exemplified that ‘Shakespeare’s Elizabethan nightmare has become ours’ (programme note) on the highly technical stage in the vast and versatile Royal Shakespeare Theatre. However, there were miscalculations in his directorial intention, and also significant discontinuity between the intention and the actual presentation. His visual exaggeration of the modern context instead of the original text, for instance, Colin Blakely’s melodramatic Titus and John Wood’s decadent Saturninus in the excessive Roman orgies, simply overstated the Roman patriarchy and its degeneracy. Because of the stylistic disharmony in the large-scale intervention, his relatively realistic portrayal of the raped Lavinia also seemed an irrelevant realism, just like ‘a gutter press sensationalism’ for some members of the audience.

As a result, Nunn’s ‘political’ production lacked unity as a theatre of realism and this failure turned the public interest away from the play. His patriarchal perspectives and control over the RSC as an omnipotent, Cambridge educated Artistic Director<sup>25</sup> was bitterly criticised: is he reproducing ‘his’ own Shakespeare taking public money in the name of government subsidy? (Macdonald, 1993: 191). Though little needs to be said on the matter here, it is reasonable to conclude that Nunn’s hierarchical position in the theatrical authority created his view for *Titus Andronicus* and ‘the Romans’, which ‘reproduced patriarchal perspective’ (Macdonald, 1993: 191).

The South African version of *Titus Andronicus* in 1989, directed by Doran and starring Antony Sher, provides us with another example of the realistic staging by a male director. This co-production of the Royal National Theatre in London and the Market Theatre in Johannesburg had strong political analogies; Shakespeare’s most appalling play became a metaphor of post-apartheid South Africa. The multi-racial casts (Romans are played by white and the Goths by black actors) and South African accents exaggerated the harsh history of apartheid. As a whole, the post-colonial setting was naturalistic because of the tense immediacy of the problems of race and violence. In particular, the portrayals of Aaron (Sello Maake ka Ncube) as a kind of

jazzman and Chiron (Oscar Petersen) and Demetrius (Charlton George) as two gangsters were effective. The image of Rome as ‘a wilderness of tigers’ (III.i.54) reflected the cruel reality of Johannesburg, despite the negative reviews that objected to the superficial adaptation, the strange reconciliation in the ending, and the scant audience in the Market Theatre.<sup>26</sup> However, the descriptions of the rape of Lavinia (Jennifer Woodburne) and her death were simply absurd.<sup>27</sup>

The style is basically realist, but there is a sudden switch into stylisation for the play’s most horrific episode, when Titus’s daughter Lavinia is raped and has her tongue and hands chopped off by Tamora’s two gruesome sons Chiron and Demetrius. As the rape begins, suddenly a slow waltz is played and the harshly defensive Lavinia becomes a passive doll-like creature; next, we see the sons rape and maim a naked doll, while, in the foreground, Lavinia herself, her hair dishevelled and her clothes bloodied, recommences a bizarre slow waltz while her lipstick is smeared (by a silent female figure into a scar and flesh-coloured mitts (adequately suggesting a post-mutilated condition) are placed onto her hands (Alastair Macawly, *Financial Times*, 15 July 1995).

Here, we notice that Doran’s treatment of rape has similarities to that of Brook: during the melancholic music, the action was stylised. While Demetrius and Chiron were actively abusing a naked shop-window dummy, the heroine was forced to become passive and displayed on stage as an object. The juxtaposition of the obscenity of the rapists and the misery of the victim exaggerates sexual hierarchy. In contrast to the active male roles ‘as bearer of the look’, Lavinia became ‘the leitmotif of erotic spectacle’ (Mulvey, 1992: 27). It is obvious that sadistic voyeurism and erotic fetishism are mixed up in this scene. It is even possible to read a misogynistic sense in this pornographic treatment. Indeed, in the ending, Lavinia was killed by Sher’s Titus who waltzed her round narcissistically to the same tune used in her rape scene. The patriarchal motivation to murder the daughter was thus narrated in the melancholic tone. Judging from the above, it is no exaggeration to say that Doran’s politics of representation, which stylised the crucial scenes for Lavinia, was also categorised into formalism. As an alternative to Lavinia’s scarlet ribbons, the doll and music functioned in order to make rape sadistic and romantic simultaneously, even in his political adaptation of *Titus Andronicus*.

In this chapter, we have seen that starting from Brook’s production there is a tendency for the male directors to represent rape in a symbolic style. Lavinia’s scarlet ribbon is a metaphor for an evasion from the reality of bloody rape and/or a hidden desire for romantic rape. On the one hand it distances the audience through its indirectness and on the other hand it lures the audience towards a sick fantasy. One can go further into the interpretation of the ribbon by exploring the notion of a vagina as a castrated penis, after Sigmund Freud’s concept of ‘castration anxiety’ (1977: 351–408). It is possible that the male directors felt threatened by Lavinia’s ‘doubly-castrated’ body, her lack of a maidenhead, tongue, and hands and therefore felt it necessary to circumvent female sexuality by decorating Lavinia with the ribbon.

## II. Realism of Rape and Female Agonies: Lavinia's Bloody Body

The tradition of British theatre saw shifting points in the eighties by two female directed productions of *Titus Andronicus*. Even though there was a difference in their use of media, they attained significant achievements in two of Britain's renowned cultural institutions: Howell for the BBC and Warner for the RSC. Both of them rendered the horrifying bloody play using a realistic directorial style. Their pioneering works in the inequality of the theatrical world was also a challenge to male aesthetics and traditions of reading and staging Shakespeare. These female directors share similar aspects. Although there is a generational gap between them, they are not Oxbridge graduates and are self-made from marginal theatres. Howell, who experienced WWII in her childhood, worked at several local theatres and the Royal Court in the 1960s before she became the only woman to direct the BBC TV Shakespeare. Warner, born in 1959, trained as a stage manager at Central School of Speech and Drama in London. She founded her own company Kick in 1980 and was acclaimed as a young classical director (Schafer, 1998: 19–23). Returning to *Titus Andronicus*, both directors were more faithful to the original text as opposed than the male directors who cut and adjusted problematic parts. In the case of Howell, who changed it little in order to adjust to a television medium (mainly in I.i and some translation from Latin to English), it is arguable that she was simply forced to follow the principle of minimal cutting of the texts in the BBC series.<sup>28</sup> However, regardless of the conditions, she preferred to use the original as noted, 'I search the actual words used—I love word—and the facts that it's one word that's used and not another word becomes very important to me' (Schafer, 1988: 21). Warner was praised for the non-cut production, which had been considered 'unplayable' throughout the centuries. Furthermore, these directors chose to stage violence in naturalistic ways. In particular, the cruelties that concern rape were directly depicted without stylisation or the male fantasy. All the lines on Marcus's reaction to the ravished Lavinia were restored and 'a crimson river of warm blood' (II.iii.22) was drained out of her body. In addition, Lavinia and Tamora have stronger agency in these productions.

The BBC *Titus Andronicus* (like the RSC production) became the last among thirty-seven plays to be staged. Howell, who had previous experience of directing *Henry VI*, *Richard III* and *The Winter's Tale*, still found it difficult to direct the 'nonsense play' (Fenwick, 1986: 20). Then she discovered her rhetoric through the eyes of Young Lucius who observed the atrocious Roman politics as a 'fearful slumber' (III.i.253): 'the boy has read some horrific story of the worst excess of the Roman Empire and then had a nightmare' (Fenwick, 1986: 18). From the beginning with the return in triumph of his grand father to the ending in his father's proclamation as Emperor, Paul Davies-Prowles's Young Lucius witnesses the inhumane tragedies. In the process of consistent yet extreme vengeance, even the scholastic boy with distinctive glasses came to be involved in the murders of the enemies. Thus, by intensely accentuating the presence of the boy as a silent watcher/narrator (who is more invisible in the original text) the play was reconstructed for the television medium. For the director, who stated that 'it would look strange to see red ribbons on the screen' (Dessen, 1988: 45), this strategy was indispensable when she masterfully staged the surplus violence and revenge. Otherwise the extravagant horror and grotesque nature of the play would have easily made 'a video nasty' (Fenwick, 1986: 22).

It is interesting to note that many scenes of Howell's *Titus Andronicus* end with Young Lucius's close-ups to display his reactions to the variety of barbaric acts. The audience in front of the television witnesses the position of the grandson shift from that of a distant watcher to a revenge-assistant. Through the nightmarish expedition, the boy, who showed his nihilistic face with contempt to Chiron (Michael Crompton) and Demetrius (Neil McCaul) in IV.ii, frantically runs to Old Lucius (Gavin Richard) in order to stop him stabbing Saturninus (Brian Protheroe) in the ending of bloody banquet. Subsequently, while his father is being elevated to the throne, the son vacantly stares at Titus (Trevor Peacock) and Aaron's dead baby. In the political mourning and coronation, only Young Lucius shows real grief to the spiraling violence and death. The closing shot of his distracted face super-imposed with the image of skulls foretells the next tragedy. What is important here is that the watcher's gaze is innocent and also neutral in terms of gender. Howell chose not to use a mature Roman, such as the protagonist Titus and the promoter Marcus (Edward Hardwicke), but an early teenage boy as the main narrator. Judging from his slender physique, his sympathetic care to his deformed aunt and the reactions in the ending, the viewpoint of Young Lucius can be called 'feminine'<sup>29</sup> within the context of the masculine society. As a result, the invention of narrator provides an alternative approach toward the hardcore violence. This neutral gaze through the glasses becomes all the more suggestive when the other watchers are taken into consideration: the Roman senators, soldiers and servant who wear masks. In the face of ceremonial group violence the amphitheatre is full of those who are devoid of any expression or speech, passive and anonymous. Their masks without mouths convey to 'the audience that the world of the Andronici is not characterized by political freedom and democratic ideas' as Mary Maher (1988: 147) remarks. Howell, who generally avoided stylisation, ventured to describe the impersonal society by employing ritualistic styles. The gray maskers are 'neutral' in the sense that they have no individual personality in the homogeneous military system. Furthermore, it must be noted that the presence of the masked watchers is a metaphor of the audiences of the play in the theatre and also the watchers of this television programme. In this metatheatrical structure, 'a chilling image of a clinical voyeurism was created alongside a strong sense of the moral culpability of witnessing such events and failing to protest about them' as Elizabeth Schafer (1998: 177) accurately points out. Howell's adept usage of special effects that are available in television and film, such as close-ups, slow motions and super-imposed images, as well as theatrical devices created multiple viewpoints.

In this rendition, 'a clinical voyeurism' is no longer a patent for male characters and audiences. It is worth examining here the subject of the gaze more closely by focusing on the portrayals of the major female characters. Howell realistically rendered the female agonies and revenges contrasting the ritualistic description of male violence. In Howell's pursuit of verisimilitude, grotesque and vicious elements in womanhood are not covered up by the red ribbons or melancholic music. Anna Calder-Marshall's Lavinia is represented as mercilessly disfigured after the rape and mutilation of her tongue and hands. The Roman ornament is not beautified, but transfigured into a trembling creature with bleeding stumps, mouth and disheveled hair. The camera focuses directly on the victim while Marcus is making a long speech. There are no voyeuristic, fetishistic and narcissistic pleasures in looking at the tragedy of the woman; she stands in the forest not as a sexualised object but as proof of physical and mental

torture. There is one other thing that is crucial for Lavinia: to take revenge on her rapists. Before the rape she is an elegant and passive object but after she transforms into an awesome and severe agent. Following Shakespeare's text, Lavinia goes off with Titus's hand between her teeth in III.i and receives the blood from her enemies' throat with a basin in V.ii. This scene is striking since the brutal rite of slaughter is executed in an abattoir where Chiron and Demetrius are hung upside down alongside real animal carcasses. In this setting, Lavinia takes pleasure from her awaited retaliation. Moreover, she chooses the time to die by handing a rapier to her father. Thus, the ravished and silenced daughter is given convincing presence and subjectivity in Howell's rendition.

Compared to Calder-Marshall's portrayal of Lavinia, Eileen Atkins's Tamora is not such a remarkable novelty except for the close-ups that justify her revenge. This is not to say that her characterisation and the 1980s' punk look were ineffective, but that her otherness, lecherousness and deviousness have already been emphasised by the previous male directors. Tamora's maternal dominance threatens paternal authorities and subverts patriarchal desires and the dichotomy between active male and passive female. Judging from the viewpoint of the stage history, it seems agreeable for men to direct women in Shakespeare as either virgins or whores; Tamora as an exotically demonised queen is a cliché for them. On the contrary, the male directors tend to avoid presenting Lavinia literally once her virginity is deprived. Thereby, what is important in Howell's portrayal of women is that the deflowered daughter is allowed to express her agonies and vengeful power as much as the vampish mother.

Turning now to Warner's *Titus Andronicus* at the Swan in Stratford in 1987. She came to the RSC as the second female director after Buzz Goodbody in 1975 (Macdonald, 1993: 186), from a totally different background from those of authoritative directors, such as Hall and Nunn, who have traditionally dominated the hierarchy.<sup>30</sup> Instead of a Cambridge education and apprenticeship with an established company (which is the case with most of the RSC assistant directors), she obtained her directorial techniques and skills through her independent company Kick which explored working with minimal casts and sets and intensive rehearsals. This contrasted the fashion of the highly designed RSC productions in the late 1980s. (Dessen, 1989: 57 and Macdonald, 1993: 192–93). In other words, Warner's methodology of creation itself was a revolution in the existing system as well as her revision of *Titus Andronicus*. How were unplayable elements in Shakespeare's non-cut text transformed into theatrical potential by Warner's direction? The answer will be provided in comparison with two previous productions: Brook's exceedingly stylised rendition in 1955 and Nunn's comparatively realistic rendition in 1972. There was a marked dissimilarity between the concept-orientated male directors and Warner. For example, Brook spent almost a year in remaking the text, composing the musical score and designing stages to realise his 'barbaric ritual' (Macdonald, 1993: 187); Nunn who read the modern socio-cultural phenomena in the play endeavored to contextualise it in 'the Romans'. On the other hand, Warner started her job with no dominant notion and pressures but solid 'trust' in Shakespeare's original text. Then she worked on it with her actors and designer Isabella Bywarter, facing each problem and finding out 'workability' on stage scene by scene (Stephen Macmillan, *Telegraph Weekend Magazine*, 17 Dec. 1988: 38–39). The director, who developed her keen sensitivity through Kick, demonstrated this in the Swan, a

pseudo-late-Renaissance playhouse with less than 500 seats most of which are 10 metres or closer to the stage (Holland, 1986: 193–209). In this collaborative process, they rediscovered intense tragi-comic elements in the problematic play as well as an affectionate father-daughter relationship in the brutal story. As a result, they attained a significant non-cut *Titus Andronicus* with overwhelming theatrical tension on the bare stage of the intimate space. In effect, her theatre of intimacy and intensity was close to Shakespeare's theatre; this is a valid argument based on the excavation of the Rose Theatre (Bate, 1995: 67).

Let us take a look at Warner's rendition focusing on how she portrayed two women in Roman patriarchal sexual politics. From the first scene, the hierarchical structure was physically represented: the victorious Roman general over the defeated queen of the Goths—men over women. Brian Cox as Titus noisily enters seated on a ladder carried on the shoulders of Tamora, her sons, and Aaron (Peter Polycarpou) whose necks were bound to the ladder like beasts. Estelle Kohler's captured queen in red was suggestive since she herself seemed like a victim of sexual violence under Titus's masculine power. Her wretched presence contrasted violently with Sonia Ritter's Lavinia in yellow, the stainless daughter in the prestigious family. Because of this vivid contraposition, Tamora's vengeful logic becomes plausible and Lavinia's helpless plight in II.iii seems all the more pitiable. The Gothic mother swore revenge against the Roman father by inciting her sons to rape his daughter. A violated woman transgresses the other female body by reiterating the male strategy; by invading the virgin soil of the Andronici, the goddess of Revenge devastates the reproductive root of the family. Warner's production 'moved into another dimension with Lavinia's story' as Mary Harron observed:

Her rape and abasement were brilliantly handled as her two attackers [Piers Ibbotson and Richard McCabe] entered crawling on their hands and knees, pretending their hands were stumps, in vicious imitation of her mutilation as she dragged herself behind them. It was a perfect crystallisation of the most terrifying thing about this play: the character's absolute lack of pity (*The Observer*, 17 May 1987: 23).

It will be clear from this citation that the most gruesome scene was staged using the actors' intense physicality. The post-rape scene of Lavinia, which lies at the centre of the original, had been relatively marginalised in previous productions except for Howell's version. The male directors tended to conceal the physical and linguistic violation in their use of rhetorical and visual alteration. By contrast, Warner chose to insert the offstage sounds of the rape, and reveal the ravished body and enforced silence on stage according to Marcus's full reaction. Donald Sumpter as the astonished uncle slowly closed in upon the muddy creature and asked, 'Why dost not speak to me?' (II.iii.21) At this point, 'a crimson river of warm blood' rose and fell between the lips of the half-crazed Lavinia; the audience, who had been observing both figures, was shaken with pain.<sup>31</sup> The juxtaposition of Marcus's gaze and voice and Lavinia's presence and silence was inevitably effective. Since the audience saw her helpless agonies through their eyes and simultaneously understood them through Marcus's eyes, the unspeakable pain became all the more visible. Through this treatment of Shakespeare's text, this scene was restored to the original position in the play. The reality of the raped Lavinia came as a shock to the audience as

it had never done before. The point to observe is that Warner did not have to ‘tame the beast’ when she directed Lavinia’s stained body.

Warner’s careful direction can be recognised in the following scene III.i, which both Brook and Nunn cut. She effectively drew the plausible human relationship between the self-mutilated father and the devaluated daughter with the pathos of Shakespeare’s tragi-comedy. In contrast to the male director’s patriarchal Titus as a heroic general, Warner articulated paternal aspects of Titus. After he loses *status quo*, he becomes an affectionate father and a vulnerable human being, which echoes the insane/sane King Lear. Warner’s close focus on Titus from the angle of a family in the Roman absolutism describes how a merciless warrior turns out to be a pathetic and eccentric father-avenger. This is fundamentally the reason why the audience was moved. It is also important to notice that Warner’s version of Tamora was novel in her realistic and ordinal figure. In contrast to the past exotic and decorative Tamoras, such as Audley’s operatic queen on Brook’s elaborated stage, this earthly Tamora was not supported by gorgeous costumes in order to enforce her sexual and political power. Kohler fully used her own body to show her anger and cunning, as Ritter did it to express her suffering and sympathy to her father; this Lavinia did not need the scarlet ribbons. The feminist movement and sexual revolution that occurred between the 1950s and the 1980s affected the portrayal of women as Bate supposes (1995: 66). Following the text that was written by the male playwright for boy actors in the Elizabethan period, the female director created the new image of Tamora in the context of the 1980s.

Warner’s realism and textual fidelity made it possible to convince the audience how Shakespearean characters were driven into the extremities of sensational violence and cruelty in the intimate theatre.<sup>32</sup> The question once again arises: sharing similar directorial choices and interests in Roman politics, what made the distinction between Nunn’s production and Warner’s production? Their different attitudes to Shakespeare’s script and play offer the key to an understanding of their ‘theatrical realism’. In sharp contrast to Nunn’s dominant conceptual and visual assertions in his ‘extravagant’ projects, Warner rendered the script with actors’ voices and bodies. She directed the play with ‘burning conviction of its worth and discovers[ed] the humane under the mountainous horrors’ (Billington, *The Guardian*, 13 Oct. 1987: 24) instead of any anxiety of influence or creativity. At the same time, her commitment to the production was extremely intense; she saw roughly 70 stagings of her rendition out of 120 times and occasionally reworked them: ‘my real passion lies in what you can do with the production *after* the first night’ (Sheridan Morley, *Times*, 5 Jan. 1989: 8). Her style was different from other RSC directors at that time who belong to the hierarchical ideology apparatus. In the existing structure, Warner’s candid attitude to the script, play and theatre, which exploited the dramatic potentialities of the ‘unplayable’ piece, was innovative. As a result, Warner’s realistic production cynically re-visioned *Titus Andronicus*, establishing the counterpart to Brook’s symbolic rendition. Warner’s Shakespeare had an enormous influence on the male dominated Shakespeare institution as Stanley Wells remarks: ‘subsequent directors will have far less excuse than before for evading its problems by textual adaptation or by evasive theatricalism’ (1989: 181).

To conclude on what has been said above, I have proved that Howell and Warner have different perspectives, approaches and representations as well as pressures to those of the male

directors.<sup>33</sup> Whether they recognise themselves as feminists or not, gender is a substantial determinant in how the play is read, staged and seen (Schafer, 1998: 4–5). Hence the fact that women directed Shakespeare's play is a monumental statement in the tradition of British theatre. A tradition that is male-dominated and that places Shakespeare at 'the centre of the Western canon' (Bloom, 1994). Fighting with conservative norms, they brought innovation to the representation and perception of human violence revealing the bloody body of Lavinia, which had been concealed and decorated by the male director's view. Representing 'the female body as a radical site of opposition to male models' (Dolan, 1988: 83), the female directors questioned the existing ideology and submitted their alternative viewpoints.

### **III. Desires in American films: Lavinia in a Cult Market and Hollywood**

At the turn of the millennium, two films on the Shakespearean 'potboiler' were produced in the United States: *Titus Andronicus* by a lesser-known director Christopher Dunne in 1999 and *Titus* by the Tony Award winner for *The Lion King* Julie Taymor in 2000. Being based on the same script, it is hard to draw parallels between the low-cost 'splatter' movie played by unknown actors for a cult market and the huge-budget and high technology Hollywood film for the global market, starring Anthony Hopkins as Titus and Jessica Lange as Tamora. Nevertheless, it is still interesting to read different desires in the light of each director's intentions in approaching the original text and actual cinematic representations of atrocities.

The independent cinema by Dunne provides a starting point to inquire into hidden and explicit desires for a cult market. It seems natural for the people who have a mania for gory horror, violence and sensationalism to be fascinated by *Titus Andronicus* since it offers abundant grotesque resources to indulge in. Actually the customer reviews are completely divided into two parts. In his self-conscious attempt at the film, the original text was radically cut and the amateur-like actors could not even enunciate the lines clearly. Moreover, prolonged scenes of excessive bloody violence and insanity in cheap settings and strange background music make 140 minutes of perverse entertainment. For instance, the film starts with an offensive human sacrifice; Lucius hysterically tears off Alarbus's face skin and begins to play with the head as if it were a ball. This is precisely the 'video nasty' that Howell was anxious about before she rendered the original text based TV programme in approximately 150 minutes. It seems matter of fact that there is no figure of Young Lucius in Dunne's film.

Among several nasty scenes, it is noticeable that the female characters are treated in an extremely sadistic and misogynistic way. The irritating virgin's tongue and hands are cut out in front of the video watchers as a punishment; while Lavinia is losing her sense, Chiron and Demetrius mutilate her body using a latex tongue and a mannequin's hands with tubes in the middle of the wrists squirting blood. After this pseudo-realistic rape scene without Marcus's lengthy lines, the pert Lavinia is completely tamed and becomes the mere victim of sexual violence, the feud and her father's madness. Even though she carries Titus's hand between her teeth, she neither writes letters to prove her rapists nor accepts their blood; she is not allowed to be subjective in the retribution. The silenced daughter eventually attends the bloody banquet just to lose her head to one deft stroke of her father's sword. Similar observations apply to two

nurses; their character agency in this ‘slasher and splatter movie’ is to be murdered with shouts and gallons of stage blood. The stout Tamora is also sinistly punished after enjoying her imperious presence; the camera focuses directly on the illegitimate baby being crushed and her corpse being served to the flies. These figures above clearly reflected the desires of an American cult culture that is mainly addressed to the gaze of male watchers. The producers’ politics of ‘realistic’ representation of inhuman violence are evident: to reconstruct the Shakespearean revenge tragedy into a superficial bloody film for manipulating and satisfying desires of male maniacs. Therefore, it is natural that their portrayals of female characters and their fates are more weird and absurd than the original text; they are sadistically fetished and eroticised in the paranoiac pseudo-reality or fantasy.

Although it is beyond comparison, the director, screenwriter and co-producer of *Titus*, who read Shakespeare’s *Titus Andronicus* as a summary of two thousand years of human violence, made a totally different approach from Dunne. Taymor adapted Shakespeare’s vision into the medium of 160 minute long Hollywood film learning from her directing experience in an Off Broadway theatrical production (for New Audience) in 1994 (Taymor, 2000a: 178). Being more faithful to the original text than other recent screen adaptations of Shakespeare, she envisioned the revenge play using ‘the realism of film’ (Taymor, 2000b): ‘I wanted to blend and collide time, to create a singular period that juxtaposed elements of ancient barbaric ritual with familiar, contemporary attitude and style’ (Taymor, 2000a: 172). In effect, her tragic-comical *Titus* is an amalgam of contrasts: realism and surrealism, substance and illusion, human and animal, beauty and grotesque, sanity and insanity, revenge and compassion. Besides, it is possible to trace the influence of her precursors in her cinematic rhetoric.

Just like her stage version, the film begins with a prologue in a kitchen of an urban apartment ‘in Brooklyn or Sarajevo’; a boy (Osheen Jones) wearing a paper bag mask is being absorbed in his private war game at his single supper. While he is drenching his toy soldiers in ketchup blood, the noise from the television becomes deafeningly loud. In the following real/imaginary explosion, the clown (Dario D’ambrosi) suddenly appears and takes the boy to the Roman Colosseum—‘the archetypal theater of cruelty, where violence as entertainment reached its apex’ (Taymor, 2000a: 178). He plays his role as Young Lucius and the audience thereby witnesses the events thorough his eyes. What is notable here is that Taymor also chose the boy of ten as a watcher/narrator of the masculine world like Howell, even though Taymor’s film angle has infinite freedom in time and place. In the more literal medium, Taymor is able to take the audience into a variety of locations, such as the ruins of Hadrian’s Villa, Mussolini’s government centre and Pula Colosseum in Croatia. In addition, Saturninus’s imperial orgy scene in Cinecitta Studios reminds us not only *Fellini Satylicon* but also Nunn’s ‘political’ direction. In fact, Taymor’s choice of location in the juxtaposition of ancient, barbaric and ritual elements and postmodern, civilised and materialistic elements inevitably has political resonances. The audience may think of the genocide in the Balkans and Rwanda and even daily tabloid scandals. Her stage flexibly moves between the Shakespearean world and a contemporary world. Her desire as a film director is clear: ‘Our entertainment industry thrives on the graphic details of murders, rapes and villainy, yet it is rare to find a film or play that not only reflects the dark events but turns them inside out, probing and challenging our fundamental beliefs on morality

and justice' (Taymor, 2000a: 174). Whilst the world seems to be reeling with the public violence, as it was in Elizabethan time, Taymor's representation of brutality in *Titus* as a form of entertainment and as a dissertation on the basic human nature through war, family, revenge and compassion is connotative. The director, who was requested to cut some violent and sexual scenes by the Motion Picture Association of America, asserted in the following term in order to win an R-rating (restricting admission to adult):

. . . there is plenty of violence in the movie, but none of it is cheap violence. . . . I've dealt with violence often in the theatre, and I think if you totally stylize it, it becomes poetic, intellectual and almost beautiful, and this allows to bear watching it. But you can also miss the point of the raw feeling of disgust you feel in your stomach when you witness real violence (*Citizen New Service*, 5 Jan. 2000).

What does she desire in her *Titus*, especially her concept 'Penny Arcade Nightmares' (P.A.N.), the series of surreal visions of violence in forms of sophisticated video games? The post-rape scene of Lavinia (Laura Fraser) and the third P.A.N. (the flashback of rape when she writes the name of her rapists) are good examples to examine Taymor's aesthetics in shooting sexual violence. Instead of utter realism which easily makes the image too grotesque in film, she chose the surrealistic effect commanding the techniques of computer graphics. As opposed to Dunne, the rape and mutilation occur off screen, yet the consequence is more appalling. Lavinia standing on the stump in the deserted swamp produces blood from her mouth in response to the call of Marcus (Colm Feore); and her hands become twigs. In Lavinia's flashback of rape, her head and arms are topped with a doe's head and hooves. As the crazy punk-rock music plays on, the sociopaths, Chiron (Jonathan Rhys Meyers) and Demetrius (Matthew Rhys), become the half man and the half tiger that ferociously attack and ravish the doe-woman. Through the action of trying to keep her white skirt down we are reminded of the image of a Hollywood actress: Marilyn Monroe. This iconic parallel or metacinematographic citation alludes to female sexuality as a public and humiliating sport. Compared to Howell's rendition that simply used close-ups, slow motions and super-imposed images, the rapid development of computer graphic technology that occurred in a decade radically affected Taymor's presentation of sexual violence, in addition to the wholly different attitudes and atmospheres between the BBC and Hollywood.

Taking advantage of surrealistic effects by technology, Taymor built up realistic characters and natural actions in accordance with Shakespearean verse through a 3-week rehearsal period, which was unusually long for a film shooting (Taymor, 2000a: 181). It is interesting to note that Taymor and Warner share several aspects in their directorial styles despite the different use of media: firm conviction of Shakespeare's text, ferocious enthusiasm in rendition, deep commitment, intense rehearsal, and prudent discovery of human nature through extreme trauma. Moreover, Taymor's direction of the vulnerable father Titus, the vengeful mother Tamora, and the father-daughter relationship parallel those of Warner. Hopkin's Titus is a combination of King Lear and Hannibal Lecter as he describes himself. Since he well-portrayed Titus's fatal flaw, 'rigidity and inability to adapt to the emotional climate around him' (Taymor, 2000a: 175), the transformation from a warrior hero to the lunatic chef is convincing. In particular, his figure

as a tearful and loving old father evokes the audience's sympathy. Just like Warner's direction, the father gently and quickly breaks his daughter's neck using his hand. Hopkin's opponent, Lange's Tamora is a mixture of Lady Macbeth and Cleopatra. Her femininity and masculinity as a gorgeous and sexy Roman queen as well as a caring and vindictive Goth mother are well expressed in her costume: 'Madonna-like' metal breastplates which cover the elaborately tattooed skin. Tamora's masquerade as Goddess Revenge/Statue of Liberty with huge breasts and nipples in the final P.A.N is an impact. Twisting Alan Cumming's neurotic Saturninus around her finger, Tamora enjoys affairs with her slave lover Aaron; Harry Lennix plays the dark villain skillfully accentuating the racial problem and pride. The chemistry between characters' intense agency raises a crucial question of the play—do humans have a right to take revenge against those who have destroyed your loved person?

The finale of the bloody banquet makes it symmetrical with the ketchup-bloody kitchen in the opening. Instead of the television noise, the sound of a gunshot made by Lucius (Angus Macfadyen) reverberates. Then the camera zooms out from the dead bodies in the centre of the colosseum to the bleachers, which are packed with spectators: 'They are of many nationalities, races, and they are silent, still' (Taymor, 2000a: 166). Just like Howell's metatheatrical direction, it is explicit that Taymor provides the metaphor for the audience in a cinema and also the people who witness human atrocities somewhere on the earth in front of safe televisions; we are just watching without doing anything. While Marcus and Lucius address the anonymous mass to justify Aaron's public execution, Young Lucius picks the orphan up off the bloody table. Holding the black baby of the enemy in his arm as the Clown did to him in the opening explosion, the boy moves toward the exit of the theatre of cruelty. As he approaches the archway, 'the night slowly gives way to dawn' (Taymor, 2000a: 170). This ending is suggestive as an answer to the crucial question above. Shakespeare's original text does not mention the fate of Aaron's baby; his life depends on the sincerity of the upstart Emperor. The politically corrupt Emperor promotes the idea of another circle of vengeance. However, though it is still ambiguous, Taymor dares to direct a closing image of compassion and redemption. Through the initiation of violence, the boy wearing a paper back mask in a kitchen presumably has obtained wisdom and chosen his way. From this invention, it is possible to read Taymor's desire or hope in this film, her political message to the modern world when 'racism, ethnic cleansing and genocide have almost ceased to shock by being so commonplace and seemingly inevitable' (Taymor, 2000a: 174). Her *Titus* mirrors the reality of brutal human nature and its history of conflict from ancient times to nowadays. On the other hand, it tries to reflect the possibility of the reconciliation and salvation for the coming centuries in which more complicated warfare will happen.

Being directly inspired by Shakespeare's text, Taymor wove cultural icons and socio-historical reflections into her first directed film. The first Hollywood made *Titus Andronicus* has been represented by using pioneering special effects, to such an extent that the audience is spoiled by it.<sup>34</sup> Although Taymor's *Titus* did not create a 'great' sensation in terms of Hollywood box-office value,<sup>35</sup> it is noteworthy that she presents her provocative angle by transposing the original text into a contemporary context. In addition, the film provokes the re-evaluation of the most neglected play in Shakespeare's canon in theatrical and academic

spheres.<sup>36</sup>

The two American films on *Titus Andronicus* which were produced almost simultaneously evoke completely opposite desires in each entertainment market: a cult market and a Hollywood global market. What was once a stage-play written by Shakespeare for people of his age has now been transformed into a product of contemporary popular culture through the process of cinematographic adaptation. This product is tied down to certain laws of distribution such as the law of supply and demand meaning that somewhere the intentions of the adaptation must fit and fulfill the expectations of the targeted audiences. The body of Lavinia is treated as a sexualised doll to satisfy a male sadomasochistic gaze in Dunne's film and as a visual icon to convey a political message for female humiliation in Taymor's. Since the perspectives in representing the raped woman are radically diverse, those two Lavinias can never be identified as the same character. The Dunne and Taymor films thus provide extreme examples of the polarisation of desires between a male maniac director and a female pioneering director in the context of the turn of millennium.

### Conclusion—Who is Lavinia? Who sees Lavinia?—

As we have seen there are striking contrasts in the representation of Lavinia between the male directors and the female directors. This polarity in the domain of creativity reflects gaps in sensibilities and attitudes towards rape in the latter part of the twentieth century. The tragedy of the raped woman can be one of the most sensational visual pleasures to some members of the male audience as it is in the real world. In addition, the reality of the raped woman tends to be covered up and substituted for stereotypes by some male authorities, which also happens in real life.<sup>37</sup> Furthermore, both on stage and off stage, the treatment of sexual violence is always deeply associated with the violation of discourse. As a notable example in the play, Marcus's lengthy words in order to report the tragedy in place of the silenced Lavinia have often been deprived. Similarly, in real life, raped women have often been forced to be silent under patriarchal pressures. In this parallel context, Lavinia becomes a metaphor of all the women who are deprived of their sexual autonomy, human dignity, abilities and rights to utter.

Therefore, the female directors' renditions, which restored Marcus's lines, centralised II.iii and revised the revenge of the devouring females in their socio-cultural context is pioneering. This can be read as their defiance against the phallic dominance over the text, representation and reception of the raped woman. Their challenges in presenting Shakespeare's play from female perspectives in the gender biased territories also run parallel with the figure of Lavinia, who is suffering and struggling in a world of Roman masculine politics. In the hierarchical power structure, both theatrical and real worlds where men compete, female physical and mental hardships are incidental. Returning to the text, it is sometimes difficult and dangerous for women to represent the deflowered daughter. Hence, as Freud defines, if the vagina signifies the castration of the penis, not only sexual ownership of women but also its denial are deferred; female sexual subjectivity, rhetoric and sensibilities are caught up in the phallocentric/logocentric order from the origin. Therefore, the representation of rape by women can easily be trapped in the male gaze, which will eventually reproduce a patriarchal perspective.

In addition to this fundamental dilemma of the female sexuality, the complexity, ambiguity and unknowability in the issue of sexual violence problematises its representation and reception. In the process of staging Lavinia's literally unspeakable and inexpressible anguish, a huge gap can be produced between an individual reality of rape and a 'realism' of visualised rape for the 'mass' spectators, which men tend to manipulate. Because female existence tends to be marginalised in a men-oriented theatre practice (Dolan, 1988: 1-18) and their gaze forced to identify with the male one (Mulvey, 1989: 29-38).<sup>38</sup> However, it should be possible to share the ferocious pains and facts of rape with both male and female audience in reproducing the subject. Hence, sexual violence is undeniably a tragedy for both sexes; it is not only women who can become the victims.

Despite several difficulties and dangers concerning female sexuality under the patriarchal politics, what Howell, Warner and Taymor achieved is thereby worth praising. Challenging the male directors' intentions and renditions, these female directors presented their alternative viewpoints in the male dominated institutions of culture and entertainment: the BBC television, RSC stage and Hollywood film. Through these diverse uses of media and their inherent realism, they each managed to make the raped Lavinia stand for realities of female tragedy; they were no longer serving the male gaze and men's scopophilic pleasures. Changing the position of subjugation and marginalisation, their Lavinias transformed into active agents of revenge. Their monstrous images were subversive for the male-made image of the ravished Lavinia as a spectacle. As such, the rebellious victims put the existing systems of representation and perception of sexual abuse into question. The female director's challenge to represent their Lavinia can also be called revenge or defiance of the patriarchal cultural norm and to establish their alternative norm.

Who is Lavinia?—If female existence is physically and linguistically 'castrated' from the origin, the raped and mutilated woman can be identified by all women. Having their genitals, tongues and hands castrated by men, do women merely exist as 'the image bearer of the bleeding wound' (Mulvey, 1992: 23)? Are they helplessly vulnerable and powerless in nature?—The answer is no. As the silenced Lavinia manages to communicate and reveal the names of her attackers, women exercise their capacities. As the transfigured Lavinia subjectively takes revenge and decides when to die, women play roles in their own image-making. Who sees Lavinia then?—The bearer of gaze should not be restricted to men as it is expected to happen in a real world. Contemporary women can take the initiative to articulate the issue of rape from their viewpoints more than in the Elizabethan period when Shakespeare created Lavinia for a boy actor. Nowadays, female directors, performers and spectators have the right to approach the raped woman from their perspectives. Transforming Lavinia's passive and subservient bodies into subjective and subversive sites, women thus constantly seek to revise the existing patriarchal ideology.

## Notes

This paper is a condensed version of my dissertation for MA in Drama and Theatre Studies submitted to Royal Holloway, University of London in 2000, which read the issue of rape from the actual renditions of *Titus Andronicus* in mainly the UK and USA. Part of this paper was also presented at the 39<sup>th</sup> Shakespeare Society of Japan in 2001.

<sup>1</sup> For the backgrounds of the first stage presumably at the Rose, negative opinions against the notorious barbarity and authorship problems, see especially Hughes (1994: 1-47, 151-163).

<sup>2</sup> For further details of the stage history, see Williamson (1992: 437-39), Hughes (1994: 13-47) and Bate (1995: 37-69).

<sup>3</sup> All references are to the Arden edition by Bate (1995).

<sup>4</sup> It is debatable to say that the male ‘perspective’ and the male ‘gaze’ are defined by sexual orientation. However, these terms generally refer to heterosexual males in this paper. Based on the observation that heterosexual men hold the power in society. In the case of the ‘female gaze’, the problem becomes more complicated: what happens when women become the observers? There is room for further investigation on hetero/homo sexual female gazes towards men and women as their sexual objects. In addition there is the almost impossible problem of gauging a precise response from the audience. Since these issues are too deeply rooted to treat here, I will focus on female bodies as objects of male sexual desire and attack. The explanation of the notion of ‘gaze’ is more extensively developed in Gamman (1988) and Mulvey (1989).

<sup>5</sup> *OED* presents four meanings of ‘rape’ quoting the different usages from *Titus Andronicus*. 1. The act of taking anything by force; violent seizure (of goods), robbery. 2. The act of carrying away a person, esp. a woman, by force. “Rape” call you it, my lord, to seize my own, / My true betrothed love . . . ’(I.i.405-06) 3. a. Violation or ravishing of a woman. Also, in modern usage, sexual assault upon a man. ‘This is the tragic tale of Philomel, / And treats of Tereus’s treason and his rape – / And rape, I fear, was root of thy annoy (IV.i.47-49) 4. *concr.* One (esp. a woman) who is raped.

<sup>6</sup> See also Gossett (1987: 168-90), Daileader (1998: 23-50) and Catty (1999: 1-6). Gossett’s analysis on English law and traditional morality of the Renaissance age that is deeply connected to literature and theatre is valuable.

<sup>7</sup> For references on English Renaissance transvestism, see Jardin (1983), Zimmerman (1992) and Dusinberre (1996).

<sup>8</sup> For example, Orgel writes that ‘theatres are viable only insofar as they satisfy their audiences. The depictions must at the very least represent *cultural* fantasies, and women are implicated as well as men’ (1996: 11). See also Howard (1988).

<sup>9</sup> This point is argued by Freedman (1991: 117): ‘Since the male is traditionally envisioned as the bearer of the gaze and the woman as the fetished object of the gaze, the staging of any spectacle is always a matter of sexual difference’. See also Mulvey (1992: 22-34).

<sup>10</sup> See Helmes (1989: 192-200). In relation to rape, Catty argues that ‘The lurid description of rape and the blasphemous detailing of female nakedness which can be found in romance are replaced in drama with the physical actuality of actors on the stage. . . . stage plays inherently encourage a voyeurism which, paradoxically, may be heightened rather than modified by the transvestitism of the boy actors, and which contributes to a problematising of the whole concept of the visual’ (1999: 94-95).

<sup>11</sup> For the background of Brook’s production and the reviews, see also Dessen (1989: 14-23) and Williamson (1992: 439-60).

<sup>12</sup> Concerning the positive effects of the text cutting, Trewin points out that ‘He [Brook] has manipulated the uneven text so that his actors could let fly without dread of mocking laughter; whenever he spied a possible laugh, he either cut the offending phrases or unmasked his protective atmospherics’ (1971: 82).

<sup>13</sup> Beauman is also critical of Brook's textual alteration. After quoting his programme note, she continued that 'Circumspectly, however, whenever the text threatened to descend from barbaric dignity to bathos, he cut' (1982: 224).

<sup>14</sup> Relevant to this point David's following remark: 'Severed heads were not allowed to appear unless decently swathed in black velvet and enclosed in ornate funerary caskets. Titus's hand, so swaddled and coffered, was decorously cradled in Lavinia's arms, not carried off between her teeth as the text directs. The pig-killing of Chiron and Demetrius occurred off-stage and (perhaps to compensate the audience with one maiming in place of other) Titus's final cry of triumph, 'Why, there they are both, baked in that pie' [V.iii.60] was lapped of its last four words' (1957: 128).

<sup>15</sup> Bate is correct when he says that 'in terms of structure of the play, the post-rape scene is pivotal because it shifts the balance from the language-registers associated with action to those associated with reaction' (1995: 10).

<sup>16</sup> Prompt-book in the collection of the Shakespeare Centre in Stratford. Concerning this scene, Bate also comments that 'The scene was made into a silent tableau in a kind of discovery space upstage centre' (1995: 59).

<sup>17</sup> For the poetic technique *blazon*, which catalogizes and possess female bodies, see Vickers (1985: 95–115).

<sup>18</sup> David also remarks that: 'the actors as puppets of the producer's conception' (1957: 127).

<sup>19</sup> The term 'theatrical male authority' is used here to mean the men who are dominantly engaged in theatre practice, in particular Oxbridge educated men who traditionally have hegemony over the spheres of culture, entertainment and journalism. See also Dolan (1988) and Macdonald (1993: 185–205).

<sup>20</sup> Beauman remarks that 'Significantly, in his criticism of the production, Tynan devoted almost all his space to Olivier's performance. He added a few snappy asides about Leigh, and dismissed the rest of the casts and the production in a few lines. Most of the other critics followed suit. Tynan was the last of the major English critics to write in this way' (1982: 222).

<sup>21</sup> On the discussion about how patriarchy works in the representation of rape, see especially Kahn (1976: 45–72).

<sup>22</sup> According to Sinfield (1994: 182–205), before WWII, the RSC was not as 'artistically, culturally, and politically' significant as the present in terms of an ideology maker. The 'radical' image of the RSC was established by Artistic Director Hall in 1960. Hall stated that 'I am a radical, and I could not work in the theatre if I were not. The theatre must question everything and disturb its audience'. Nunn, who succeed Hall's position, also stated in 1974, 'I want to be concerned with a theatre that is determined to reach beyond the barriers of income, I want an avowed and committed popular theatre. I want a socially concerned theatre. A politically aware theatre' (Addenbrooke, 1974: 66).

<sup>23</sup> Beauman critically documents of 'the Romans': 'Nor was the extravagance of the staging of the Romans confined to the technical antics of the new machines; all four productions at Stratford were notable for their operaticism. All four began with elaborate processional scenes not textually indicated, which seemed both an attempt to link all four plays, and to make a quick preliminary directorial statement about the societies the play examined' (1982: 315). For the records of Nunn's production and the reviews, see also Dessen (1989: 36–44) and Williamson (1992: 464–71).

<sup>24</sup> It is worth mentioning that even today there are only a few female critics as well as directors. The evaluation of productions, which later become stage history, thus tend to be constructed by male voices according to their thoughts and tastes.

<sup>25</sup> For a discussion of the RSC status in British theatres, see particularly Sinfield (1994: 182–205). It can be pointed out that the RSC directors' left egalitarian viewpoints are connected to the homogeneous educational and social backgrounds. In particular, it is notable that both Hall and Nunn come from working class and rural backgrounds, by way of grammar school to Cambridge, where F. R. Leavis taught.

<sup>26</sup> In contrast to the booked-up situation in the Cottesloe Theatre, the surprisingly scant audience

partly stemmed from the complicated socio-cultural conditions in South Africa. Because the theatre exists in the dangerous area of the centre of Johannesburg, it is difficult for white theatregoers to access. In addition, as a result of the boycott movement of white culture, most of the blacks were deprived of the chance to grow interests in theatres. In particular, Shakespeare was regarded as the other's entertainment (Yuriko Akishima, *Asahi*, 24 June 1995). For the Market Theatre, which was founded for the purpose of anti-apartheid, this situation would have been serious in terms of cultural and also financial aspects.

<sup>27</sup> I am indebted to the Shakespeare Centre for the video record of the performance and the National Theatre Archive for the programme, related photos and reviews.

<sup>28</sup> On the axiom and criticism of the BBC Shakespeare series, see Holderness (1994: 206–25).

<sup>29</sup> Howell prefers to discuss her work in terms of 'feminine'. In her interview, she replies that 'My work isn't from a feminist point of view, but it has been feminine because I am feminine' (Schafer, 1998: 22).

<sup>30</sup> Dunderdale's report and statistics (1984: 9–11) are useful to show the status of women in the British theatre in the 1980s. It is a surprise that the theatrical world lacks more female representation than other decision-making areas of society.

<sup>31</sup> In this scene, shocked gasps from the audience were recognised even on video. It was also notable that the audience often laughed at the tragi-comic scenes, for instance, III.ii where Titus killed a fly and the final banquet scene.

<sup>32</sup> However, even Warner's production has not solved the problems of the play as Dessen marks 'some scenes on some evenings prove risible rather than powerful' (1989: 114). Even though this is rather matter of fact since a play is a live art which relies on specific time and audience, his point re-proves the difficulty in staging *Titus Andronicus*.

<sup>33</sup> It should be added that female directors tended to be 'freer' from excessive pressures, expectations and compromises than male 'major' directors who tended to be tied down to huge budget projects in the patriarchal structure. Also, it is not coincidental that Warner's simple but intense stage was innovative in the context of a material oriented 1980s stage.

<sup>34</sup> Laura Landon cites the comment of Jeannette Lambermont who directed *Titus Andronicus* in 1989: 'I think audiences have been spoiled by special effects in movies, which can never be matched on stage' (*Otawa Citizen*, 6 Jan. 1999).

<sup>35</sup> It seems reasonable to suppose that a filmed version of a Shakespeare play is comparatively difficult to appeal to contemporary movie fans. Though there is not enough space here to explain the reasons, the (un)popularity of the recent films show the facts. For example, although Kenneth Branagh is a well-known modern Shakespeare populariser like Franco Zeffirelli in the 1960s, his film adaptations have not obtained a 'great' hit in terms of a Hollywood box-office value so far. Even his complete 3 hour *Hamlet*, which was critically praised, could not bring in the crowds. The same observation can apply to other films 'in "Hollywoodization" of Shakespeare in 1990s' led by 'a new American cultural imperialism' (Boose, 1997: 8, 19), except for Buz Luhrmann directed *William Shakespeare's Romeo+Juliet*, starring Leonardo DiCaprio and Claire Danes. This unusual commercial success (gross sales \$75million from \$17 million budget) of rock-and-roll Shakespeare targeted youth culture can paradoxically offer one reason why mainly British-oriented 'traditional' and 'intellectual' Shakespearean play is unpopular for the masses: the difficulty in adapting Shakespeare's script and setting. In the case of Taymor's *Titus*, starring both British and American star actors supported by the Hollywood system, its comparative 'unpopularity' may be caused by not only the most unpopular Shakespeare script but also the smaller-sized distributor Fox Searchlight Pictures and producer Clear Blue Sky. This also might be associated with one of the reasons why *Titus* could not win any Oscar Prizes.

<sup>36</sup> It is an interesting incidence that the seminar titled 'Titus in Our Time' (leader: Heather James) was held at Shakespearean Association of America in 2001. This is to be considered in the recent film and stage productions of *Titus Andronicus* as a cultural critique, especially in terms of high and low cultures, racial discourses and religious pieties and skepticism (SAA Bulletin, June 2000).

<sup>37</sup> The manipulated mass media and discourse in relation to war and sex is a typical example. For instance, the Japanese government tried to cover up the negative historical aspects in WWII. Under the patriarchal pressures, sincere individual voices of ‘ex-comfort women’ were often silenced, ignored or turned into simple stories.

<sup>38</sup> Female spectators are considered in Mulvey’s ‘Afterthought on “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” inspired by King Vidor’s *Duel in the Sun* (1946)’. In this essay, she explains ‘the relationship between the image of the women on the screen and “masculinisation” of the spectator position, regardless of the actual sex (or possible deviance) of any real live movie-goer’ (1989: 29). According to her theory, the female spectator, who is out of target in cinema, still finds pleasures if she can accept ‘masculinisation’, by identifying with a hero as the male spectator does.

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