TITUS ANDROGYNOUS: FOUL MOUTHS AND TROUBLED MASCULINITY

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For both content and style, Julie Taymor's *Titus* (1999) drew sharply divided reviews. The film unfurled Shakespeare's grim tale of rape and cannibalism against a chronologically warped Rome of chariots, motorcycles, and Ziploc bags. For some, this was an effective problematization of violence across time ("a stylish interplay of past and present," approved Jonathan Bate [2000] for the *New York Times*). For others it was arty pandering ("She . . . seems to feel her coy use of anachronism is the height of wit," sniffed John Anderson [1999] of *Newsday*). Whether they liked it or hated it, reviewers could not miss the film's deliberate engagement with gratuitous violence and visual excess. As Roger Ebert put it (2000), this is a film that "goes over the top, doubles back and goes over the top again." But so, too, does the play: "God forbid," he observed, "we should ever get a devout and tasteful production of *Titus Andronicus*."

As Ebert's remark suggests, reviewers laid the blame for the gory plot at the feet of the youthful bard. In the interest of making a name for himself in competition with the likes of Christopher Marlowe, he wrote an impious and tasteless play. In those jaded days of bear baiting and traitorous heads displayed on pikes, it was a great success, which is not a compelling reason to make a movie of it now. The blame (or praise) for the film's visual style, meanwhile, lay with Taymor and her history of avant-garde costume and set design for the theater. Taymor was making her first film and was perhaps driven (in competition with the likes of Ridley Scott) like the young Shakespeare to make a name for herself—again, arguably, at the expense of

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taste.[1] The reviewers focused on the immature script and first-time director and, because they were aware that Taymor had already produced *Titus* as a play, they evaluated the movie in comparison with other stage and film productions of Shakespeare. Thus they did not recognize an important source for the film's imagery, much of which has no immediate motivation in Shakespeare's text: the sword-and-sandal Roman movie. The constitutive visual dialogue of *Titus* is first and foremost with Roman movie epics, not with Shakespeare on stage or in film. Thus evaluating *Titus* in terms of Loncraine's *Richard III* or Branagh's *Hamlet* misses much of the point.[2] The film is better served in terms of thematic analysis by careful comparison with *Demetrius and the Gladiators* and *The Sign of the Cross*.

As we shall see in the second part of this paper, *Titus* is organized visually around settings and images that are not to be found in Shakespeare's script but are staples of the epic Roman movie. Margaret Malamud demonstrates in her contribution to this collection that the sword-and-sandal epic relies upon an anachronistic comparison between imperial Rome and twentieth-century America and Europe. While her paper focuses specifically on films from the 1930s, from the 20s through the 60s, the glory that was Rome was an opportunity, on the one hand, for film directors to stage ever more extravagant triumphal parades and amphitheater games, while Roman decadence, on the other, was an opportunity to reassure American national identity in the face of various challenges: the Depression, consumer capitalism, media excess, imperialism, and racism. Viewers could enjoy the visual candy of reconstructed Roman spectacles while denying that they were "really" like those Romans, who usually spoke the Queen's own ornate and oppressive English. Rather, the audience's allegiance was

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1 E.g., Liam Lacey's review for *The Globe and Mail* (January 21, 2000): "Lauded for her internationalist, magpie approach to theatre . . . in her debut film Taymor uses her production skills to create an eclectically evil world, part fifth-century Roman barbaric, part last-century totalitarian." Kane attributes to Taymor (like Shakespeare) a desire to privilege spectacle over narrative and determines that this is a good thing: "The 'gruesome' nature of *Titus* exists primarily for the viewer's visual and emotional excitement—after all, no one wants to pay $9.50 to be bored" (2001.4).

2 Anderson's 1999 review asserts that "attaching fascist connotations to Shakespearean tragedy is as old as Orson Welles' 1937 *Julius Caesar* and as fresh as Richard Loncraine's 1995 *Richard III*, but Taymor seems convinced it's novel." I argue that she knows it is not novel, but is more interested in the representation of Rome as fascist in the movie tradition, rather than fascism in productions of Shakespeare. Similarly, Fedderson and Richardson 2002 stress Taymor's obligations to the Roman past and Shakespeare's play, but not to the Roman movie tradition.

with the hero who spoke the honest dialect of America and rebelled successfully against the empire and its pleasures.[3] With its orgies, bathing, and amphitheater scenes, *Titus* engages a central thematic concern of the classic Hollywood films: the threatened submersion of the (American, democratic) male body in (Roman, imperialist) appetite, represented physically by open mouths and wounds, and architecturally by the rounded form and openings of the amphitheater.

David McCandless has recently argued (2002) that Taymor's objective in both the stage and film versions of *Titus* was to reverse the customary identification of the film spectator with the sadistic gaze, to force the spectator instead into a masochistic position so that the trauma of this extraordinarily violent play could not be evaded or neutralized by detachment. Similarly, Kirsten Day suggests in this collection that John Ford's *The Searchers* maneuvers the audience into the position of the excluded Other in order to question the "mechanics of racism"—an argument certainly relevant to the treatment of Aaron in *Titus*. In McCandless's view, the play was more effective in this regard because of its use of metatheatrical "Penny Arcade Nightmares" and its uncompromisingly bleak finish, which allowed for neither celebration of Titus's revenge nor hope that we had at last moved beyond sadistic Roman (or Elizabethan) pleasures.[4] This article suggests that Taymor, by quoting the tradition of Roman films, creates a second kind of metatheatrical space deeply imbued with masochism and same-sex desire. That the conclusion of *Titus*—the young Lucius, Titus's grandson, carries Aaron's mixed-raced child off into the sunrise—is also a quotation from this tradition challenges the reading of McCandless and others that this ending amounts to "trauma management," offering the spectator an easy, optimistic exit from the film. Rather, the status of this ending as quotation renders "transcendence" itself metatheatrical, intensifying rather than blunting the traumatic effect of *Titus.*

In the classic films, of course, the use of Rome as a metaphor for contemporary issues is rarely acknowledged overtly: Richard Burton does not pilot an Oldsmobile through Judea in pursuit of *The Robe*. However, the presence of the metaphor is often revealed through tell-tale anachronisms

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3 For excellent overviews of the use of Rome as a means to address contemporary political and social anxieties, see Fitzgerald 2001, Winkler 2001, and Wyke 1997.34–146. Babington and Evans 1993 and Solomon 2001 are also useful.

4 McCandless 2002; see also Burt 2001.

on screen. Charlton Heston wanders the Roman Middle East of *Ben-Hur* as a blue-eyed Jew, while Italo Gismondi's twentieth-century fascist model of Constantine's fourth-century Rome ornaments Nero's first-century bedroom ("Behold, Neropolis!") in *Quo Vadis*. Day notes that the role of the Comanche chief Scar in *The Searchers* is played by a white actor (Henry Brandon), similarly confusing past Other with present Self—a confusion Taymor will explore by casting a black actor with a distinctly contemporary African-American accent as Aaron. Taymor's use of anachronism is overt rather than coy in comparison to the Roman film tradition. *Titus* takes the metaphor and makes it literal: Rome's imperial troops ride motorcycles, and a great deal of the action is staged in a real fascist building, the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana (the "Square Colosseum") in the E.U.R. By equipping her Rome with refrigerators and pinball machines, Taymor challenges the safe retreat from Roman pleasures common to the classic films, giving us the danger (devouring imperial appetite) but not the easy disavowal (we are not Romans); in David McCandless's terms, it is part of the film's strategy of "reasserting the Real against the Symbolic" (2002.487).

Taymor's reliance on motifs from Roman movie epics does not mean that the imagery internal to Shakespeare's Elizabethan play is marginalized. As Bate points out in his review (2000), Taymor retained more of the original text than any recent film production of Shakespeare other than Branagh's *Hamlet.* This makes sense because, as the first part of this paper will establish, Shakespeare's text in *Titus Andronicus* explores thematically the open mouth/wound as a symbol of Roman decadence. The tomb of the Andronici, the gruesome pit that contains Bassianus's body, the vagina and mouth of first Lavinia, and then Tamora, are all overlapped as orifices violated in the play's deepening spiral of appetite and revenge. *Titus* brings this chain of befouled orifices together with the staging of the violated male body in the classic films, allowing one system of imagery to comment upon and reinforce the other. Both the classic films and Shakespeare's text raise the question of how to close the too open body of Rome, and the final section of this paper will examine how the initially puzzling end of *Titus* plays the answer of the film genre against the answer of Shakespeare's text, suggesting a fragile transcendence of both.

I. "TITUS, I AM INCORPORATE IN ROME"

The opening scene of *Titus Andronicus* establishes a fundamental connection between the tomb and eating the corpse. This connection will be sexualized over the course of the play, so that the earth as receptacle comes to equal the female body and the vagina the mouth. Since this theme has been much discussed in recent criticism, it can be summarized fairly quickly.[5] The most important observation to be added here is simply that the earth, as a devouring, chaotic female, is strongly identified in Shakespeare's play with Rome itself. This allows Taymor's *Titus* to nest Shakespeare's Rome within the amphitheater of Hollywood's Roman films as complementary spaces where narrative stops and gender is deeply troubled, even though Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* never mentions the amphitheater or Roman games.

In 1.1.90ff., Titus, newly returned from war with the Goths, lays up his dead sons in the family tomb, which he addresses as "sacred receptacle of my joys, Sweet cell of virtue and nobility." The burial of his sons, according to Titus, demands the sacrifice of Alarbus, the oldest son of Tamora, the captured Queen of the Goths. Significantly, Lucius declares: "Let's hew his limbs till they be clean consumed" (1.1.132), and later returns to report: "Alarbus' limbs are lopped, And entrails feed the sacrificing fire, Whose smoke like incense doth perfume the sky" (1.1.146–48). The perfumed odor of Alarbus's roasted entrails, together with the references to consumption and eating, allow this passage to anticipate the cannibal feast at the end of the play—and, indeed, the sacrifice of animals in antiquity routinely included the eating of their flesh.[6] Meanwhile, the description of the tomb as "sacred receptacle" and "sweet cell" anticipates Aaron's command to Chiron and Demetrius to "revel in Lavinia's treasury" (1.1.631). It also foreshadows the pit into which Bassianus's body is dumped, described by Martius as "this foul devouring receptacle, As hateful as Cocytus' misty mouth" (2.235–36).

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5 See Bate 1995.6–31, Kane 2001, McCandless 2002.491–92, and Willbern 1978.

6 Kane 2001.5 connects the two scenes. Perverted sacrifice, with human victims in place of the customary animals, would be a theme familiar to Shakespeare from Virgil (e.g., the killing and eating above the altar of Poseidon of Laocoon's children by Athena's snakes in *Aeneid* Book 2 or the breaking of Polydorus's "limbs" to make the fire for a sacrifice in Book 3—these are actually branches growing out of his funeral mound, but they bleed) and Seneca (e.g., the "sacrifice" of Thyestes' children in *Thyestes* or Polydora on the tomb of Achilles in *Troades*).

The passage from tomb to pit is through the forest, the setting for the hunt that celebrates the double wedding of Tamora to Saturninus and Lavinia to Bassianus. This forest is deeply unstable in terms of gender (Kane 2001.11–12). Here, Chiron and Demetrius will "hunt" Lavinia, the "dainty doe" and "strike her home by force" (1.1.617–18), with "home" perhaps functioning as both adverb and noun and thus adding another term to the set of spatial metaphors for the vagina. At the same time, the forest is also where the pit yawns open to receive first Bassianus, murdered by Chiron and Demetrius, and then Quintus and Martius, who tumble in and cannot get out. In this respect, it represents Tamora's aggressive, devouring sexuality and the reversal of her helpless begging for Alarbus's life. And yet, as Bate observes of this pit: "We do not have to be card-carrying Freudians to see the connection between what we know Chiron and Demetrius are doing to Lavinia, and Quintus' description of a 'subtle hole,' 'Whose mouth is covered with rude-growing briers / Upon whose leaves are drops of new-shed blood'" (1995.7–8). The pit, then, also represents Lavinia's violated genitals, and the stress on its mouth leads directly to Marcus's description of her mouth after the rape, when Chiron and Demetrius have hacked away her hands and cut out her tongue (2.3.22–25).

> 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.

This connection is made even more explicit in 4.1.65ff., when Lavinia takes Marcus's staff in her mouth and marks in the sand: "Stuprum—Chiron—Demetrius." This forces Lavinia to re-enact the rape, with mouth in place of vagina, as she writes it down.[7] These letters scratched in the sand give new names to the story Lavinia has already managed to convey to Titus and Marcus wordlessly by laying her stumps on the tale of Philomela in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (6.411–674). Lavinia's inscription in the dust also recalls Io's inscription of her own name with her hoof after she has been raped and struck dumb by Jupiter by being transformed into a cow (2.568–750, esp. 642–63). Thus in Shakespeare's text, Lavinia's rape begins

7 See Bate 1995.36 and Kane 2001.15.

to ripple out toward the many rapes in Ovid, which often feature silencing, overlapping an attack on the victim's mouth with sexual violation.[8]

As Lavinia lays open the story of Philomela, Marcus observes with overwhelming compression: "See, brother, see: note how she quotes the leaves" (4.1.50). To "quote the leaves" of Ovid has terrible literalness—more than simply citing written pages, it means to make the Ovidian forest speak, to bring to words the rustling of the many victims of rape in the *Metamorphoses* and other poems who are left without speech. This may explain Taymor's decision in the film to replace Lavinia's severed hands with tree limbs. While it makes literal Marcus's comparison of Lavinia to a mutilated tree in 2.3.15ff., it also effectively represents Daphne, the first victim of rape in the *Metamorphoses*, transformed into a laurel tree whose branches Apollo breaks off to make his crown.

Philomela's story, in turn, shapes the revenge taken by Titus. As Philomela and Procne cooked Procne's child, Itys, and fed him to Tereus, so will Titus render Chiron and Demetrius into pies and feed them to Tamora. However, the switch in gender from male Tereus to female Tamora allows the equation between earth (tomb, pit), vagina, and mouth to be restated, so that the act of eating reverses the act of giving birth.[9] As Titus announces to the captive Chiron and Demetrius (5.2.186–91):

> Hark, villains, 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.

8 For the prominence of rape in Ovid, see Fredrick 1997 and Richlin 1991. Of the presentation of Lavinia's rape in Shakespeare's text, Kane observes (2001.11): "Clouds, flower, water, wind—pastoral tropes are co-opted into ironic Gothic horror-show jokes." Ovid similarly represents the raped or beaten female body as a pastoral landscape, though whether the final intent is "horror-show" humor is debatable.

9 As McCandless (2002.491–92) put it: "The emasculated patriarch thus takes extravagant revenge on his symbolic emasculator, Tamora, concretizing her image as rampaging oral mother, as all-consuming pit, by turning her body into a tomb to receive the 'coffin' of her sons."

Finally, when Titus reveals, after killing Lavinia, that she was raped by Chiron and Demetrius, Saturninus demands them for punishment. Titus responds (5.3.59–61):

> Why, there they are, both baked in this pie,
> Whereof their mother daintily hath fed,
> Eating the flesh that she herself hath bred.

Thereupon he stabs Tamora, but, for the majority of the play, she has dominated Rome together with Aaron the Moor. Her relationship with Aaron symbolizes Rome's undone boundaries, the openness of civilization's capital to penetration from the dark and uncivilized (Bate 1995.6). As Bassianus remarks: "Believe me, queen, your swarth Cimmerian / Doth make your honour of his body's hue, / Spotted, detested and abominable" (2.3.72–74). Eventually, Rome's corruption takes physical form in the child of Aaron and Tamora, of which the Nurse declares: "Here is the babe, as loathsome as a toad / Amongst the fair-faced breeders of our clime" (4.2.69–70). With Saturninus overmatched and cuckolded by Aaron, Tamora's appetite for sexual pleasure and personal revenge rules unchecked, and her body, as tomb, wild forest, and devouring earth/mouth, becomes the Urbs. As she herself observes after Saturninus has chosen her for his bride: "Titus, I am incorporate in Rome" (1.1.467), with the legal sense of "formally admitted," but also the more primal suggestion that her body has become identical with Rome's (Bate 1995.156).

Titus's own feast of revenge consumes most of the cast and places his one remaining son, Lucius, on the throne, with the help of the erstwhile barbaric Goths. The extent to which this offers any sense of closure—political, narrative, or corporeal—is open to debate, but before returning to this issue, we should first consider how Taymor's *Titus* manages to enrich Shakespeare's associative chain of tomb-pit-vagina-mouth-earth by drawing upon the representation of Rome on film.

II. A MATTER OF TASTE

Titus begins with a solitary boy whose lunch with toy soldiers rapidly declines into an apocalyptic food fight. He begins to smash down the soldiers in rage while stuffing his mouth full; bombs suddenly erupt outside, and he is snatched down the stairs of his flat into a Roman amphitheater. While this scene is obviously not in Shakespeare's play, it estab-

lishes visually the theme of eating gone violently wrong, pointing directly to the significance of the mouth in *Titus Andronicus*. As Bate notes: "The 'mouth' of the pit becomes crucial when we realize that Lavinia is not only being raped but also having her tongue cut out; throughout the play, the action turns on mouths that speak, mouths that abuse and are abused, mouths that devour" (1995.9). For the first half of the movie, Saturninus provides the primary example of the abusing and abused mouth. Moving from brittle tirades to sensuous orgies, Saturninus is the epitome of oral excess, and while the primary influence on *Titus* seems to be the Hollywood Roman epic, certainly other directors have explored the connection between oral excess and Roman architecture. As Stourley Kracklite observes in Greenaway's *The Belly of an Architect*: "[Chicago is] . . . the home of some of the best carnivorous architecture in the western world . . . that is, of course, outside of Rome."[10] Similarly, the presentation of Saturninus in bodily terms looks directly back to the imperial, gender-troubled children who rule Rome in films from Charles Laughton in *The Sign of the Cross* to Joaquin Phoenix in *Gladiator*.[11]

At the same time, the descent in the opening scene from the flat down the stairs to the amphitheater suggests the mapping of Shakespeare's pit onto Roman architecture. The boy tumbles into the amphitheater as into a kind of hole and, as we shall see, its circular shape and arched façade stretch across *Titus* as a visual analogue to the movement from tomb to pit to vagina to mouth in Shakespeare's language. Completely unmentioned in the play (the only building that appears in the text is the Pantheon), the amphitheater in *Titus* rests upon the long tradition of gladiatorial spectacles in Roman movies; although Taymor actually used the amphitheater at Pula in Croatia, most reviewers immediately took it for the Colosseum. In the classic Hollywood films, the amphitheater is a crucial site for male vulnerability, exposing the suffering body of the hero to the devouring gaze of the crowd and, especially, that of the femme fatale—often the emperor's wife.[12] Saturninus, played by Alan Cumming, is a screamer (figure 1). With

10 Outside of *Titus* itself, perhaps the most intense visions of devouring Rome are Fellini's *Satyricon* and *Roma*; the influence of Fellini on *Titus* deserves its own study.

11 For the presentation of the emperor in many movies as an appetite-driven child, see Babington and Evans 1993.

12 For the exposure of the male body in *Spartacus* as the passive object of the gaze, see Hark 1993.153–58. She does not note, however, the importance of the active gaze of the female lead in many Roman movies.

Figure 1. The mouth of Saturninus. From *Titus*, copyright 1999 Clear Blue Sky Productions, dir. Julie Taymor.

mascara and lipstick, a flip haircut, and a petulant strut, he is also highly effeminate. Critics were quick to point out that Cumming's performance was a reprise of his role on stage in *Cabaret*, for which he won a Tony. However, these features distinguish the emperor in many Roman movies. Whatever he owes to *Cabaret*, Cumming's Saturninus belongs in the long line of Roman emperors in the movies who eat, drink, and mince their away across the screen, tongue-lashing their inferiors but simpering before their wives. For instance, Charles Laughton's Nero in *Sign of the Cross* revels in his doughy body wrapped in pearls and draped in feline exhaustion across chairs and beds, an infant tyrant with his unctuous British accent. Peter Ustinov's Nero in *Quo Vadis*, also corpulent, plays much more with the ancient tradition of Nero as poet; there are numerous close-ups of his lips twisted to deliver grating bits of imperial song ("I am one with the gods immortal! I am Nero the artist who creates with fire!"). Both Neros are dominated by their empresses. When Fredric March's Marcus declares he must leave her to carry out urgent imperial business across town, Claudette Colbert's Poppaea responds: "I'm the emperor's most urgent business."

The paradigm of imperial mincing and screaming, however, is Caligula in *The Robe* and its sequel, *Demetrius and the Gladiators*, played by the incomparable Jay Robinson. Drawing upon Laughton's precedent, but without the baby fat, Robinson splays himself across Rome's furniture in poses both effeminate and improbably uncomfortable, and then rises to deliver his lines in a quavering, ever-increasing shriek: "So the empire MAKES MISTAKES, and PERHAPS THE EMPEROR HIMSELF ALSO **MAKES MISTAKES!**" (figure 2).

Figure 2. Jay Robinson's Caligula. From *The Robe*, copyright 1953 Twentieth Century-Fox, dir. Henry Koster.

Alternately effeminate and extravagant in their mannerisms, all three emperors are also characterized by sexual inadequacy. Both Neros are cuckolded by their Poppaeas, while Robinson's Caligula remains strangely unmarried and asexual. However, the woman who plays the empress role in *Demetrius and the Gladiators*, Susan Hayward's Messalina, openly pursues Victor Mature's Demetrius and temporarily spirits him away to her pleasure villa. While married to Claudius, who will replace Caligula after his murder by the palace guard, Messalina spends most of the movie panting for Demetrius while at Caligula's side, essentially cuckolding both the present and the future emperor. The questionable sexuality of the leading Roman is even more explicit in *Spartacus*, as Crassus (not an emperor but an ex-consul who becomes dictator) tries unsuccessfully to seduce both Antoninus (Tony Curtis) and Varinia (Jean Simmons), but whose true mistress is Rome. Dreamily surveying the legions as they pass by his villa, he confides to Antoninus (figure 3):

> There is the power that bestrides the known world like a colossus. No man can withstand Rome—no nation can withstand her . . . how much less a boy. There's only one way to deal with Rome, Antoninus. You must serve her. You must abase yourself before her. You must grovel at her feet. You must love her.

All these troubled Roman leaders belong to a larger Hollywood type, "the usurper," described by Ina Rae Hark (1993.152):

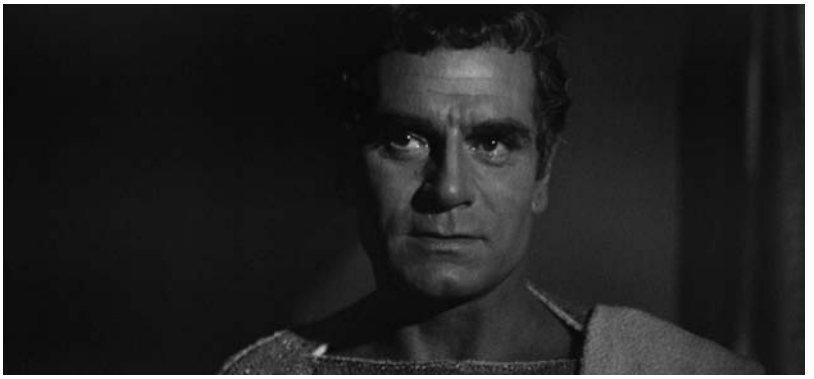

Figure 3. "You must love her." From *Spartacus*, copyright 1960 Bryna Productions, dir. Stanley Kubrick.

> From Robin Hood to Rambo, captive or outlawed men revolt because the powerful subject positions within their societies have been usurped by male oppressors who don't qualify for them . . . Thus the usurpers often display characteristics not marked as signifiers of masculinity in the codes of male film performance at the time. They may for example be effete, overweight, short, foreign-accented, or disabled.

The emperor in the Roman movie is indeed a subset of this larger group, but with two significant distinctions. First, as usurper, his inadequacy is almost always underscored by his submission to the empress—the real usurper in most of these movies is, in fact, female. Second, the emperor's defects focus significantly on the mouth. Like Cumming's Saturninus, all of the imperial figures mentioned above are distinguished by what comes out of their mouths verbally and what goes in as food. Whether Laughton's languid pout, Ustinov's tuneless singing, Robinson's apoplectic rant, or Olivier's cruel and fulsome oratory, the emperor's voice is defined in Roman movies by its excess and its otherness, corresponding to body styles both infantile and effeminate. So, too, the food that enters this mouth. There are two orgies in *Titus*; the first, early in the movie, consists of the wedding party of Saturninus and Tamora, while the second is revealed by a pan over the drowsy aftermath of a sex party upon which the arrows of Titus and his kinsmen descend. Both scenes drew substantial critical fire because they seemed to be visual and stylistic detours, excuses to offer up a retro jazz

party (the first) and some explicit sex (the second) without answering to any motivation in Shakespeare's text.[13]

The orgy, however, is a staple of the Roman movie and crucial thematically to the representation of the imperial mouth as polluted by how it speaks and what it eats. The excessive pleasures of the mouth are then, with more or less subtlety, equated to excessive or forbidden pleasures provided by other orifices. *Quo Vadis* features a long orgy scene in which Nero and Poppaea suck down grapes and spy on the revelers through colored gems; part of the dinner entertainment consists of two wrestlers fighting to the death. The gladiators in *Demetrius and the Gladiators* are treated to an orgy of food and (fairly tame) sex, leading to the rape of Demetrius's Christian love interest, averted only when the delicate Lucia apparently dies from fright. In a wonderful piece of cinematic irony, Charles Laughton, now playing the "republican" senator Gracchus, eats and philanders his way through *Spartacus*, but redeems himself by engineering the escape of Varinia and her child and then committing a noble suicide.[14] Gracchus's relatively straightforward, heterosexual gluttony, in fact, serves to set off the darker, more complex desires of Crassus, which unfold most dramatically in the famous "oysters and snails" scene with Tony Curtis—about which more below.

However, the most obvious antecedent for the first orgy in *Titus* is found in *The Sign of the Cross*. During a lengthy and openly anachronistic "Roman" party, Marcus feverishly attempts to convert the baby-faced Christian Mercia to Roman pleasures of the flesh, to the accompaniment of jazz and contemporary New York dialogue.[15] The climax of the party is a remarkable piece of same-sex seduction, "The Naked Moon," performed

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13 E.g., Anderson 1999: "Most unhappily, there is little or no organic affinity between the play and Taymor's admittedly inventive visuals. Little of what she does to accessorize this tale . . . advances the narrative in any way. On the contrary: she breaks away from the play itself on any number of occasions simply to indulge in graphic mischief and then returns to the text."

14 Futrell 2001.92 notes the importance of food in Howard Fast's 1951 novel, *Spartacus*: "Romans . . . have a destructive relationship with food; for them the staff of life becomes the stuff of death. Fast introduces this recurring motif early on, with repeated references to crucified gladiators as 'meat' to be used for the production of sausage for export. This literalization of Rome's consumption of human resources serves as a gruesome indictment of Roman taste on a quite graphic level." She does not, however, follow the use of food imagery in the film.

15 Wyke 1997.91 notes the collapse of American present into Roman past in DeMille's *Cleopatra* (1934): "Director and dialogue, studio and casting all helped to mark *Cleopatra* as a comedy of modern manners in fancy dress."

Figure 4. "The Naked Moon." From *The Sign of the Cross*, copyright 1932 Paramount, dir. Cecil B. DeMille.

by Ancaria—a Roman-sounding name for "Joyzelle," a nightclub dancer who appeared in many films in the 20s and 30s. Ancaria's siren song is interrupted just short of its goal by a choir of passing Christians intoning a quasi-Protestant hymn on their way to the amphitheater. Mercia is recalled to her faith, leaving behind a downcast Marcus and a deeply frustrated Joyzelle (figure 4).

In music and costuming, the first orgy in *Titus* draws directly upon the 30s jazz feel of the orgy in *The Sign of the Cross*, with a liberal dose of Federico Fellini. Horns swing as the guests cavort in zoot suits; Saturninus lies recumbent beside a circular pool in the lap of Tamora. An hors d'oeuvres "tray" shaped like a large female head floats by, and Tamora plucks out its eye (a green olive) and feeds it to Saturninus. Throughout the scene, there is a persistent focus on mouths drinking, eating, talking, laughing, punctuated by ejaculatory sprays of champagne. The curved walls in the background are decorated with erotica from Greek vases, underscoring the connection between excess in eating and sexual excess (figure 5).

Taymor's revision of the jazz orgy from *Sign of the Cross* allows

Figure 5. The wedding party for Saturninus and Tamora. From *Titus*, copyright 1999 Clear Blue Sky Productions, dir. Julie Taymor.

her to exploit the connection between gustatory and sexual pleasure common in Roman movies, and particularly obvious in Cecil B. DeMille's film. In this regard, the element of same-sex desire found in "The Naked Moon" is significant, as is the careful staging of both orgies in *Titus* around a circular pool. First, the presentation of female-female desire appeals to the visual pleasure of the fetishized female body, redoubled, primarily for the male gaze. However, it also is transgressive, a marker of uncontrolled Roman appetites. Second, it is combined in many movies with same-sex desire between men as a further, even more disturbing indication of Roman decadence, again in conjunction with food. Third, the bath, not surprisingly, is a particularly common place for staging male-male desire in Roman movies.

In *The Sign of the Cross*, the connection between transgressive female-female desire and eating in "The Naked Moon" has already been prepared for by Claudette Colbert's bath, early in the movie, in an enormous pool of asses' milk. Plotting to seduce Marcus and bind him to her, she splashes about while the bubbles play perilously around her nipples (figure 6). She is visited by a friend who has information for her about Marcus and his new potential conquest, Mercia. Poppaea invites her friend into the bath; as the camera pans up her legs, she drops her dress and steps in—then the point of view shifts decorously to show two pussycats at the edge of the bath lapping up milk. This less-than-subtle visual pun for female-female lovemaking, while "daring" in its suggestion of same-sex desire, remains, in a sense, conservative because both women are fetishized for the male gaze (a subject addressed in this collection by Jane O'Sullivan's examination of the Pygmalion myth in film). Potentially more threatening and transgressive is the presentation in Roman

Figure 6. Poppaea bathes in asses's milk. From *The Sign of the Cross*, copyright 1932 Paramount, dir. Cecil B. DeMille.

movies of males as objects of sexual desire for the gaze of other males. This, I will argue, happens both directly and by proxy, that is, by scenes that offer up the male body passively to an active female gaze with which the viewer is invited to identify. In staging male-male desire directly and indirectly, Roman movies retain the metaphorical association of food with sex, casting the male body as the "dish," as the female body so often is.

Not surprisingly, the bath (if not in asses' milk) is also a major site for the exhibition of male-male desire in Roman films, of which the best example is unquestionably the "oysters and snails" scene from *Spartacus* (figure 7). Cut from the original release of the film in 1960 but restored in the 1991 "Super Technirama" version, this scene drives home the connection between transgressive Roman eating and transgressive Roman sex. Shot through a diaphanous curtain and accompanied by sultry music, the dialogue between Crassus and Antoninus moves from general moral questions ("Do you steal, Antoninus?" "No, Master." "Do you lie?" "Not if I can avoid it.") to rather more pointed questions about dietary preference ("Do you eat oysters?" "When I have them, Master." "Do you eat snails?" "No, Master.").

Figure 7. Oysters and snails. From *Spartacus*, copyright 1960 Bryna Productions, dir. Stanley Kubrick.

In this context, with Tony Curtis massaging oil into the back and shoulders of Laurence Olivier, the terms of this question are obviously metaphors for sexual orientation. Crassus asks further: "Do you consider the eating of oysters to be moral, and the eating of snails to be immoral?" After some deliberation, Antoninus responds, "No, Master." Crassus draws the larger point about food/sex: "It is all a matter of taste, isn't it?" "Yes, Master." Crassus then sums up, as Antoninus applies more oil, ". . . and taste is not the same as appetite, and therefore not a question of morals, is it, hmmm?" Antoninus deftly equivocates, "It could be argued so, Master."

Stanley Kubrick has done here with dialogue what DeMille did with pussycats: represent deviant Roman sexual appetites through food, overlapping mouth with genitals. As Crassus observes as he steps from the bath: "My taste includes both snails and oysters." Reducing both male and female objects of desire to foodstuffs to be consumed, the metaphor conveys Crassus's tyrannical, and stereotypically Roman, infatuation with power. At the same time, however, the scene provocatively reverses the customary arrangement of gendered positions of viewing in mainstream Hollywood movies. The male body is here fetishized, presented behind see-through drapery with lighting and poses that call attention to, but do not finally expose, the genitals. This is particularly clear when Crassus calls for his robe and emerges from the bath. Antoninus has been provided with a kind of bathing suit, but the viewer is led to believe that Crassus is naked. As he rises, the bathrobe is wrapped around him precisely at the moment his genitals are about to be revealed, replaying with the male body

the treatment of the female body in countless other movies, Roman or not. Like Mercia and Joyzelle, or Claudette Colbert and Vivian Tobin in asses' milk, Antoninus and Crassus are both offered up as sexual objects, visual snails, for the viewer.

While this episode from *Spartacus* is particularly explicit, it simply brings to the surface the element of male-male desire and fetishizing of the male body common to bathing scenes, which, like orgies, are a staple of classic Roman movies. As such, the Roman bath would be adapted by Derek Jarman to become THE scene in his overtly homoerotic *Sebastiane*.[16] Well over half of the total run time of this movie is devoted to extended, highly fetishized scenes of males splashing about in showers, streams, and the sea, often under the openly desirous gaze of other males. By staging her orgies around and in the circular pool, Taymor manages to evoke both bath and orgy scenes from the tradition of Roman movies, scenes that carry with them their association of transgressive same-sex desire with eating and the scopophilic exposure of the male body to the gaze. Indeed, as a step in this direction, she includes a brief bathing scene early in *Titus* (see figure 8). Titus's sons, weary and wounded, wash off the grime of their long campaign, in a sense coming to life after their initial presentation as clay-encrusted automatons in the opening amphitheater scene. While the scene humanizes them, as Taymor points out in her DVD commentary, it also is clearly a nod toward the homoerotic bathing scenes of the Roman movie tradition. Indeed, the figures are arranged around the pool in poses reminiscent of classical statuary, stressing that these bodies are aesthetic/erotic objects, a technique also used by Jarman in *Sebastiane*. The poses of the foreground figures, together with the placement of their heads towards and in front of the groins of the background figures, underscore the scopophilic fragmentation of the male body—an effect literally brought home by the missing right foot of the figure seated on the left. Thus this scene both idealizes and "castrates" the male body, and, in this, it is an accurate quotation of how the bath functions in the classic Roman movie.

The perverse mouth of the emperor, then, is yoked in Roman movies with perverse Roman taste in food/sex, a taste that includes same-sex "eating" and the presentation of the male body as an object of appetite more or less equivalent with the female. However, the main venue for

16 See Wyke 2001 for a careful analysis of how this movie adapts a mythologized view of "Roman" homosexuality to address gay sexual identity in 1970s Britain.

Figure 8. Roman men bathe. From *Titus*, copyright 1999 Clear Blue Sky Productions, dir. Julie Taymor.

the display of the male body as visually and physically consumable is the "Colosseum," with its requisite scenes of gladiatorial combat that define the Roman movie. From Giovanni Vidali's silent *Spartaco* (1913) through Ridley Scott's *Gladiator* (2000), the sword-and-sandal movie has reliably featured attractive men, in various degrees of undress, pitted against wild animals, amazons, or each other, under the gaze of the mad emperor and (more importantly) his consort. While there are certainly female victims in amphitheater scenes, male gladiatorial performance beneath a female gaze is particularly important because it precisely reverses a typical motif in many classic Hollywood movies, the "show within the show" in which the female star is presented singing or dancing for an audience of men.

Again, Kubrick's *Spartacus* provides an excellent example. At the school of Battiatus (Peter Ustinov, like Laughton, a reclaimed Nero), the gladiators are put on display behind bars for two upper-class Roman ladies, Helena and Claudia. They walk up and down the row, giggling and commenting on the features of the men. Counseled by Battiatus to take the best fighter with the trident, Claudia retorts: "I want the most beautiful. I'll take the big black one," adding inter-racial desire to the list of Roman sexual transgressions. When the selection is finished, Helena warns Battiatus: "If both men are down and refuse to continue to fight, your trainer will slit their throats like chickens—we want no tricks." Claudia, however, is more sympathetic: "I feel so sorry for the poor things in all this heat. Don't put them in those suffocating tunics. Let them wear just enough for modesty."

Stripped for the pleasure of the female gaze, the male body is further exposed in the amphitheater to wounding and death. A repeated

Figure 9. Messalina watches Demetrius battle tigers. From *The Robe*, copyright 1953 Twentieth Century-Fox, dir. Henry Koster.

element in such scenes is the intense absorption of the female gaze in the spectacle of male suffering: Poppaea at the Christians, Helena at Spartacus, Messalina at Victor Mature's Demetrius, rolling around in red underpants in mortal combat with tigers (figure 9). The enraptured state of the female gaze strongly suggests that it is through her eyes that we are intended to experience the scene. In essence, the male viewer is invited to view his own exposure and suffering ("his own" to the extent that he identifies with the male lead) through the devouring erotic gaze of the empress—to witness with desire, both masochistic and "homosexual," a display of "himself" as consumable object.

While it does not contain any scenes of gladiatorial combat, by setting both the beginning and the end of *Titus* in the amphitheater, Taymor emphatically links her film to the theme of the "Colosseum" in Roman movies with its reversal of gendered viewing positions. As McCandless puts it: "In making the ancient Roman Colosseum the theatrical space within which the story of *Titus* unfolds, Taymor aligns her audience with the spectators of the ancient gladiatorial contests" (2002.501). I would add that she also aligns her audience with the Roman spectators of gladiatorial contests as represented in movies. In fact, she manages to make the amphitheater a consistent backdrop for *Titus* by staging much of the action either in front of or inside the "Square Colosseum" in the E.U.R., which functions as both senate and Saturninus's palace. Viewed from the outside, the Square Colosseum presents a flat façade pierced by ranks of identical arches, like a section of the Colosseum quoted on a square surface (figure 10). Taymor anchors her construction of its inside around the circular bath/orgy room—a kind

Figure 10. "I am incorporate in Rome." From *Titus*, copyright 1999 Clear Blue Sky Productions, dir. Julie Taymor.

of interior amphitheater. Thus she creates the sense of Rome as enclosing mouth/womb, Tamora incorporate in architecture.

By weaving key elements from Roman movies (the raving emperor, the dominant empress, the orgy, the bath, the games) into the visual texture of *Titus*, Taymor establishes a dialogue between the confusion of the mouth and the vagina in the perverse Rome of Shakespeare's text, on the one hand, and the confusion of gustatory and sexual pleasure in the perverse Rome of the classic movies, on the other. The gladiatorial scenes of the latter are particularly important in that they cast the male body, as much as the female, as object, vulnerable before the eyes of feminized emperor, the crowd, and the empress. This takes the equation between mouth and womb and extends it to the devouring eye—and, indeed, in many Roman movies, the crowd is shown eating and drinking its way through the spectacle. In this respect, Taymor's sudden transposition of the final scene of cannibalism in Act Five from Titus's dining room to the amphitheater makes a certain amount of sense, as the amphitheater in Roman movies is where the crowd literally eats while visually consuming the gladiators.

The confusion of orifices and gendered positions in the "Colosseum" of Roman movies is well captured in figure 11 showing the commencement of the games in *The Sign of the Cross*. Laughton's effeminate and flabby Nero sits beneath the Eagle, the symbol of Roman (fascist) tyranny. Flanked by Poppaea, he lifts a rose to his nostrils, as both gaze down upon the assembled gladiators. On Poppaea's left sits what is clearly a female love pet, wearing a lollipop brassiere. On Nero's right sits what is clearly a male love pet, wearing very little. Thus both emperor and empress

Figure 11. Nero and Poppaea with their same-sex playthings. From *The Sign of the Cross*, copyright 1932 Paramount, dir. Cecil B. DeMille.

are implicated in same-sex desire, and the rose Laughton holds anticipates the food he and the entire crowd will consume throughout the afternoon's entertainment. Thus this still captures the foul mouths that define Hollywood's Rome, as, in many respects, they defined Shakespeare's Rome in *Titus Andronicus*.

III. A BETTER KINGDOM?

Titus Andronicus does not end simply with the obliteration of most of its cast, and the Roman movie does not close with a grand and sensuous apocalypse. Neither Tamora nor Claudette Colbert are permitted finally to devour Rome.[17] Not surprisingly, both Romes must be rescued and

17 For the significance of the triumph of Christianity over paganism in *The Sign of the Cross* in the context of the Depression and DeMille's other films, see Margaret Malamud's paper in this collection.

transformed into more just (and less appetite-driven) visions of empire. In Shakespeare's play, the rescuers take the form of the Goths, who return as Rome's allies to set Titus's son Lucius on the throne. As Bate points out, this is consistent with Elizabethan colonialist logic, which saw imperial authority migrating from east and south to north and west, with Rome as the successor to Troy, and London as the successor to Rome. Roman luxury, a kind of triumph of the barbarian Other within Rome itself, must be purged in order to restore a more disciplined male body and a proper hierarchy between the genders. Hence Saturninus and Tamora are murdered by Titus after they have eaten her sons, and Aaron the Moor is buried alive.

In Roman movies, the male body (politic) must be rescued from the jaws of feminine appetite, but this takes two distinct trajectories. One option leaves the infantile emperor (and his empress) on the throne in the short term, but allows for the escape of the male lead and his love into Christian salvation: Jay Robinson's Caligula screams at the end of *The Robe*: "Go then, BOTH of YOU, into YOUR **KINGDOM**!" Thereupon the physical forms of Richard Burton and Jean Simmons depart to the archery fields to be slain, while their souls are transported to the clouds to the accompaniment of a chorus singing "Hallelujah!" (figure 12). This spiritual victory of the moment, of course, implies the eventual triumph of Christianity over pagan Rome.

The second option is political and moral revolution in the Roman here-and-now: the emperor is killed, and his consort is either reformed sexually or also meets her death. In *Quo Vadis*, for instance, Ustinov's Nero is put to flight when the crowd, led by Robert Taylor's Marcus Vanicius, rises

Figure 12. Richard Burton and Jean Simmons on the way to their better kingdom. From *The Robe*, copyright 1953 Twentieth Century-Fox, dir. Henry Koster.

against him, having found out that he, not the Christians, was responsible for burning down Rome. Nero rushes into his palace, strangles Poppaea, and then stabs himself at the urging of Acte, a Christian servant who nonetheless was the only person who truly loved him. Having placed the respectable Galba on the throne, Vanicius retires to the countryside to live in Christian marriage with Lygia (Deborah Kerr). In *Demetrius and the Gladiators*, the sequel to *The Robe*, Caligula is at long last silenced by a centurion's spear, and Messalina nobly (and with evident difficulty) forswears her love for Demetrius and pledges faithfulness to Claudius.

In both solutions, the confusion of appetites and orifices that reigns in "pagan" Rome is straightened out, and the converted Roman hero escapes to a monogamous, heterosexual, Christian life or afterlife. The departure of the Christian pair into a cloud of divine mist provides a direct antecedent for the otherwise puzzling conclusion of *Titus*. In Shakespeare's text, the fate of Aaron's baby is left hanging while Aaron himself is buried to his chest and left to starve; Lucius has promised to save Aaron's child, but we get no indication that this promise will be fulfilled. In *Titus*, Aaron is indeed buried, but the younger Lucius, Titus's grandson (played by the same boy whose violent lunch opened the film), rescues Aaron's child from a cage and carries him off through an opening in the amphitheater toward a distant sunrise (figure 13). The film thus ends with another striking visual moment that is unmotivated by the text of the play but distinctly similar to the ending of several Roman movies. Richard Burt suggests that this closing scene is "straight out of *E.T.*," but as a filmic quotation, it seems more genre-specific. It is straight out of *The Sign of the Cross* and *The Robe*,

Figure 13. Lucius carries Aaron's baby out of the amphitheater. From *Titus*, copyright 1999 Clear Blue Sky Productions, dir. Julie Taymor.

and the distinction is important. Whereas *E.T.* has no obvious preoccupations with masochism and same-sex desire, the tradition of Roman movies most definitely does.

That we are intended to view this moment in the context of the Roman movie tradition is strongly suggested by the way *Titus* presents the burial of Aaron. Aaron remains savagely immoral to the end (his last line: "If one good deed in all my life I did / I do repent it from my very soul"), but Shakespeare has endowed him with intelligence and fierce love for his child, thus challenging the racism to which he is openly and endlessly subjected. Taymor has him buried while tied to a cross, creating an obvious visual parallel with Kirk Douglas, hanging from his cross at the end of *Spartacus* (compare figures 14 and 15).

Race was a crucial theme in *Spartacus*, as Woody Strode's Draba ("the big black one") had refused to kill Spartacus and, instead, hurled his spear into the spectators' box and climbed up its awning in a vain assault on Crassus and his party. Struck by a guard's spear in the back, Draba's throat was cut by Crassus himself, and he was left to hang upside down in the barracks as a message to the other gladiators. Draba's example was indeed internalized by Spartacus, as I. R. Hark observes: "Spartacus invokes Draba as the model upon which to build a masculinity that is neither animal or Roman" (1993.159). Already a controversial movie because of its use of a script by a blacklisted screenwriter (Dalton Trumbo) and its transparent reference to the House UnAmerican Activities Committee in Crassus's list of "disloyal enemies of the State," *Spartacus* further disturbed the genre's association of Roman tyranny with the European fascist Other by suggesting that America was guilty of racial as well as political oppression.[18] Nonetheless, *Spartacus*, as we have seen, retained the association of same-sex desire, particularly male-male, with corrupt Roman appetites, and placed the hope for Rome's future squarely on the heterosexual shoulders of Spartacus and Varinia.

Titus freely trades upon the association of Roman decadence with fascism in the earlier film tradition, while the noticeably black American accent of Harry Lennix's Aaron further strengthens the allusion to Woody Strode's Draba. In a sense, this makes it impossible to accept the Elizabethan demonization of evil in terms of race: Aaron's heart is black because of his

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18 For *Spartacus*'s relation to McCarthyism, see Futrell 2001.97–98.

Figure 14. The crucifixion of Spartacus. From *Spartacus*, copyright 1960 Bryna Productions, dir. Stanley Kubrick.

skin.[19] At the same time, it also makes it impossible to pretend that this kind of oppression has not been part of the American experience of empire. To put it simply, the presence of Lennix alongside the Square Colosseum brings together two terms, European fascism (= corrupt Romans) and America, that most Roman movies had tried hard to keep at a distance—a distance, however, that *Spartacus* had already substantially undermined.

All of which is to say that the rescuing of Rome in *Titus* is not as easy as in most earlier Roman films because its ending, so similar visually to that of *The Robe* and *The Sign of the Cross*, in fact rejects the exclusionary logic that upholds the restoration of empire in both Shakespeare's text and the Roman movie tradition. Lucius carries off into the sunrise the child of a union that Ben-Hur's America could not have accepted. More importantly, the genre of the Roman movie had always been about staging spectacular and "perverse" forms of pleasure that cast the male body in traditionally female terms as fetish, consumable, woundable, and penetrable sexually. Ultimately, the genre would then, through its rescue of Rome in Christian

19 McCandless (2002.494) argues to the contrary that "for Taymor's white audience [Aaron] potentially stirs fears of genocidal rage . . . he presents the image of the seemingly assimilable (if marginally), highly intelligent black man whose secret ambition is to sleep with white women and destroy white men." Taymor's evocation of *Spartacus* challenges this reading of Taymor's Aaron as simply a stereotype of contemporary (1990s) nihilistic black rage—in fact, exposing it as a kind of trap.

Figure 15. The crucifixion of Aaron. From *Titus*, copyright 1999 Clear Blue Sky Productions, dir. Julie Taymor.

salvation, seal the male body back up, resituate the female body as the sole legitimate object of the gaze, and deny that those pleasures had ever really been of interest to us as spectators: that's what the Romans liked, not us.

Titus is, in visual terms, a long, partly parodic, invocation of this tradition. However, its ending does not reproduce the escape from perverse Rome into a better kingdom. Rather, while seeming to reproduce the conclusion of these movies, it measures its distance from their comfortable endings, intimating that the better kingdom of "legitimate" visual pleasures no longer exists. This leaves us to confront rather than deny or dismiss our interest in the very disturbing content of Shakespeare's play—disturbing, but not so very far from DeMille's Neronian games, with their skewered dwarves and flower-clad, sodomized maidens. Marcus's observation of Lavinia: "See, brother, see; note how she quotes the leaves," could well be said of Taymor herself, who takes Roman movies as her Ovid and forces us to read their dazzling, blood-spattered frames more carefully.

Which returns us to McCandless's argument. In part, his criticism of the film in comparison with the play turns on the lack of metatheatrical space in the former when compared with the latter's use of "Penny Arcade Nightmares." These were moments in the play in which metatheatrical spaces were set up as distinct enclosures within the larger stage space to comment upon the action, confounding the ability of the audience to assume a comfortable position with respect to the play's violence (McCandless 2002.494):

> At key moments in Taymor's stage production, a shadowy, curtained discovery space was flown in upstage of

> the main action, bounded by a gold frame and red velvet curtain. This presentational frame replicated exactly the proscenium and curtain Taymor had grafted onto the stage itself in an effort to stir associations with vaudeville, melodrama, and other low-brow spectacles . . . These peep shows defamiliar[ized] the use of violence as entertainment by showcasing bodily degradation as sleazy diversion, inviting, only to confound, a sadistic, voyeuristic gaze primed for titillating spectacle.

McCandless notes, correctly I think, that the equivalent scenes in the movie have lost much of their metatheatrical punch. However, the film compensates by opening up, through quotation from the film tradition, a different but comparable metatheatrical space. The penny arcades become DeMille, from which, as any viewer of the last twenty minutes of *The Sign of the Cross* can attest, they were never very far. McCandless suggests: "In the film, Taymor could not recreate this theater-within-a-theater and so substituted a theater-within-a-film, replacing the penny arcade with the Roman Colosseum, the original locus of violence as entertainment" (2002.500). In fact, Taymor goes this one further, recreating a tradition of films (the sword-and-sandal) within the amphitheater within a film. As quotation, the ending of *Titus* cannot escape this enclosure, no matter how long young Lucius, babe in arms, walks towards the rising sun.

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