Uplifting Her Voice: Reimagining Lavinia from Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*

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Abstract

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This thesis creates an adaptation of act five, scene three of William Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* that reshapes the play by focusing on female empowerment through the character Lavinia. Specifically, by using other Shakespearean characters' dialogue that can speak towards her situation, I have written a monologue and stage directions for Lavinia. The same patriarchal superstructures which existed in the West during the time of Shakespeare and at the time of the play's setting—and which still exist today—ensure that Lavinia remains silenced. Through my adaptation, I aim to challenge these structures in a meaningful way by returning both voice and agency to Lavinia.

Key words: Voice, agency, metamorphosis, adaptation, patriarchy, revenge, Shakespeare

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Introduction

> "To identify the place of women in Shakespeare is frequently to describe the controlling artistic and patriarchal forms. Women are celebrated (if domesticated) in comedy; marginalized (if excused) in history; empowered (if destroyed) in tragedy—and are a subversive presence in each mode."
>
> -Claire McEachern (1988)

Shakespeare is a master of dialogue. He has created characters in tragedies whose words can make you laugh, and characters in comedies whose words can make you cry. As a playwright, Shakespeare is working in an oral medium, and voice is what gives his characters life and meaning. Shakespearean characters have some of the most memorable lines in literature. Take for example, Hamlet's "to be, or not to be" soliloquy (3.1) or Romeo's "it is the east, and Juliet is the sun" (2.2.3). The lines that Shakespeare wrote for his characters have given them a life beyond his own, one that transcends time, the page, and the stage. While his tragedies are filled with characters who demonstrate power and dominance through physical violence, they also show us that voice can be a powerful asset. In *King Lear*, Goneril and Regan appease their father by flattering him in order to be granted a portion of his land (1.1). In *Macbeth*, Lady Macbeth convinces her husband to commit regicide in order to fulfill the witches' prophecy (1.7) and solidify their place as king and queen of Scotland. In *Othello*, Iago, through lies and deception, manipulates Othello into thinking his wife is cheating on him (3.4). At the culmination of her suffering, Ophelia in *Hamlet*, is given the ability to sing (4.5), allowing her to transcend the limitations of what words alone can convey. Yet, in *Titus Andronicus*, he purposefully takes Lavinia's voice away, which is the ultimate punishment for a Shakespearean character. Even villains and monsters such as Claudius and Caliban are given the liberty of voice; yet Lavinia, a victim of rape and mutilation, is imprisoned in her own silence.

This adaptation project seeks to return Lavinia's voice to her and to explore Lavinia's character and place in Titus's revenge plot by enabling her to tell her own story.

I first read the play *Titus Andronicus*, in my second year of undergrad, and for years I have been haunted by Lavinia's silence and her death. Lavinia is Titus's only daughter. She gets caught in the aftermath of the war when Tamora, the conquered Goth Queen, seeks revenge on the Romans and specifically on Titus. After a series of wretched events, Lavinia is raped and mutilated at the hands of Tamora's sons, Chiron and Demetrius (2.4). The next time Titus sees his daughter, she is defiled and has lost both her hands and her tongue. She then becomes a symbol of Titus' shame (3.1) and a focus for his own revenge. On the page, Lavinia is present yet forgotten because of her silence, and on the stage, she becomes a theatrical spectacle because of her deformities. The way she is treated and perceived in the male-dominated society she lives in is unsettling because she is not given the empathy and consideration that her character deserves. Emily Detmer-Goebel, in "The need for Lavinia's voice: Titus Andronicus and the telling of rape" (2001), highlights that, "Titus is shown to be too confident an authority of Lavinia's experience. He is an unreliable, although sincere, interpreter of Lavinia's raped body, which again emphasizes their dependence on her words" (83). As I will later argue, Titus genuinely cares about Lavinia, and tries to understand her "martyred signs," but there is a limitation to Titus's understanding of Lavinia's emotions and her body. Although he earnestly attempts to be her translator, there is a need for Lavinia's voice as Titus's translations are flawed at best, especially given that he does not realize the true extent of her assault. Lavinia's family and support system—as far as the audience is

aware—is male-dominated. The heavily patriarchal presence in this play proves to complicate matters for the silenced Lavinia,

> since Lavinia is deprived of the ability to speak, to write, or even to weave, most of her male relatives stop asking her questions after their initial inquiries; they give up thinking she can tell them anything of importance. Heaven and the will of God will bring revelation, not Lavinia (4.1.36, 73-74). But Lavinia's ability to be a source of knowledge is underrated; her disabilities do not render her incapable of communication. These men are so used to being the 'generator' of meaning and interpretations that they fumble when Lavinia tries to convey meaning. (84)

As I have previously stated, readers forget about Lavinia's presence when reading the play, and audiences view her as a spectacle when her broken body is staged. And in her own fictional world, she is forgotten and othered by those around her as well. After their initial concern for her, some of the men in Lavinia's life abandon her in her silence to pursue their own goals. Although act five, scene three of *Titus Andronicus* is centered around getting revenge on Tamora, Chiron, and Demetrius, in the play it is Titus's need for revenge that is focalized. Lavinia, although present, is characterized as being more of a bystander who watches Titus's plan unfold, rather than acting as a fellow revenger. This is something that I have always found absurd, because, as Detmer-Goebel eloquently highlights, "Lavinia may be dependent on men to tell her story, but at the same time, the men are positioned as dependent upon her; without her authorship, they cannot know, let alone revenge, the rape" (85). Regardless of the fact that the revenge is only made possible because Lavinia, through her laboured efforts, finds a way to reveal the name of her rapists, she is not viewed as a fellow revenger. Rather, at the climax of this scene

Lavinia is killed by Titus in order to free him of shame. As Titus reveals, the feast scene is a ploy to reveal to everyone that Chiron and Demetrius raped Lavinia, and that Titus has already punished the perpetrators. Although Titus enacts this revenge in Lavinia's name, the way this scene is written, and the way Lavinia dies has always felt wrong, and somehow incomplete, as if there is something fundamental missing. I cannot shake the feeling that the missing piece is Lavinia's voice, as well as her hand, in the revenge plot. Because of this, I felt compelled to somehow return Lavinia's voice, and give her the agency I felt her character is capable of.

Through the practice of adaptation, I have reimagined act five, scene three of *Titus Andronicus*. I have written a monologue, as well as stage directions that give Lavinia the opportunity to express herself and be an active participant in the revenge plot against Tamora and her sons. In this thesis, I will justify the decisions that I have made in my adaptation, as well as further explore Lavinia and Titus's characterizations. Chapter one is my reimagined adaptation of act five, scene three. My objective was to return Lavinia's voice to her as I feel that the original work, which appropriates a woman's suffering for patriarchal aims, demanded a feminist reimagining. I have inserted my monologue into the play as it exists, leaving the other characters' words intact and only adding Lavinia's voice to it at a moment where I felt the play seemed most to demand it. My goal throughout this process has been to uplift her voice. While I have prioritized Lavinia's vocality, I have rewritten the scene's stage directions in order to convey how I imagine the setting, as well as actions that convey how I interpret the characters' feelings and reactions. In order to restore Lavinia's voice to the play, I have pieced together lines from other Shakespearean characters to create a voice that allows her to express her

feelings of anger, frustration, grief, and longing. I chose to use these characters' lines instead of writing original lines because they have voices that are able to speak for Lavinia. By using Shakespeare's own dialogue, I was able to better suit the play's representation of women's autonomy to our own contemporary moment. In doing so, I have not used my own voice to put words in Lavinia's mouth the way the men around her have. In addition to this, I have played with the notion of body horror to give Lavinia more agency as a revenger. My hope is that this adapted scene will showcase a different side of her. Rather than viewing Lavinia only as a theatrical spectacle, or neglecting her presence in the text, I want Lavinia's humanity to be centered.

Chapter two outlines the writing process in order to explain the creative choices that I have made, as well as why I felt they were necessary. In particular, this chapter highlights the specific lines I have borrowed from other Shakespearean characters, their context in their respective plays, and how I have used them within Lavinia's monologue. In addition to this, I make an argument in support of giving Lavinia more agency through voice, and additional stage directions. I also discuss the key character dynamics in *Titus Andronicus*, and how they affect my characterization of Lavinia.

Chapter three is focused on theorizing the gaze that is fixed upon Lavinia. There is an innate fluidity to the patriarchal perception of Lavinia, as the composition of her identity shifts from the ideal woman to a monster, and later from monster to martyr. I felt that these identities that have been ascribed to Lavinia are of particular importance because there seems to be a vast difference in the expectations of literary daughters and sons with more pressure and consequence falling on the shoulders of daughters. In addition to this, this chapter makes reference to the art of Michelangelo and

Caravaggio—artists who occupy a similar echelon to Shakespeare in the Western canon of great works—because of their representation of prematurely broken bodies, images that mirror the fate of multiple Shakespearean daughters.

Finally, chapter four discusses the relevance of adaptation in the twenty-first century, making reference to why *Titus Andronicus* is relevant to our current historical moment, in the wake of the overturning of Roe v. Wade. This chapter primarily explores adaptation through the theories of Linda Hutcheon and Margaret Jane Kidnie in order to develop a better understanding of the history of adaptation and its processes.

My intention with this project has been to create a foundation to view Lavinia as more than just a silenced victim and object of revenge for Titus. What I feel is often forgotten when reading or staging *Titus Andronicus* is Lavinia's humanity. I wanted to assist in amplifying Lavinia's voice, her earnest attempts at communication, and a fuller realization of her agency. Despite the recentness of her immense physical disabilities, Lavinia refuses to be robbed of her agency. She is able to innovate solutions to overcome these newfound impediments which do not supplant her being disabled or render it merely a metaphor, but rather use her previously defined will to demonstrate resilience in the face of brutality. Lavinia is a fighter, and this is something that she proves throughout the play. To deny her the opportunity to have a hand in her own revenge, or to view the revenge as Titus's and not her own, is an insult to her character. Although the play is named after her father, I feel that Lavinia's role is the most vital in the play. Her character drives the plot, motivates those around her into action, and demonstrates female fortitude despite existing in a heavily patriarchal society. Shakespeare has given voice to many characters, some being villains, monsters, and rogues; yet he chose to take

Lavinia's voice away. Regardless of being silenced, Lavinia has persevered through sheer determination. Like Ophelia, who sings her songs of sorrow, this monologue is Lavinia's song. By using adaptation to return Lavinia's voice, I have made *Titus Andronicus* better suited to our contemporary moment so that Lavinia can be seen and especially heard anew in the twenty-first century.

Chapter One
The Adaptation

[Act Five Scene Three]

Setting: Outside Titus's estate, a long rectangular table is set horizontally on stage. The table is covered in a long white tablecloth and is set with plates, cutlery, and empty crystal glasses. Behind the table [stage left] is a double set of large wooden doors

Enter Lucius, Marcus, and the Goths, with Aaron, Guards, and an Attendant carrying the baby

LUCIUS

Uncle Marcus, since 'tis my father's mind
That I repair to Rome, I am content.

[FIRST] GOTH

And ours with thine, befall what fortune will.

LUCIUS

Good uncle, take you in this barbarous Moor,
This ravenous tiger, this accursèd devil.
Let him receive no sust'nance. Fetter him
Till he be brought unto the Empress' face
For testimony of her foul proceedings.
And see the ambush of our friends be strong.
I fear the Emperor means no good to us.

AARON

Some devil whisper curses in my ear
And prompt me that my tongue may utter forth
The venomous malice of my swelling heart.

LUCIUS

Away, inhuman dog, unhallowed slave!—
Sirs, help our uncle to convey him in.

Sound trumpets

The trumpets show the Emperor is at hand.

[Guards and Aaron exit]

Enter Emperor Saturninus dressed in a black suit and Empress Tamora dressed in a long red gown with Aemilius, Tribunes, Attendants, and others

SATURNINUS

What, hath the firmament more suns than one?

LUCIUS

What boots it thee to call thyself a sun?

MARCUS

Rome's emperor, and nephew, break the parle.
These quarrels must be quietly debated.
The feast is ready which the careful Titus
Hath ordained to an honorable end,
For peace, for love, for league and good to Rome.
Please you therefore draw nigh and take your places.

SATURNINUS

Marcus, we will.

Trumpets sounding, the double doors open.
Titus enters, dressed in a white apron over a white double-breasted jacket, completed with white trousers, and black shoes. In a grand gesture he bows

TITUS

Welcome, my lord; welcome, dread queen;
Welcome, ye warlike Goths; welcome, Lucius;
And welcome, all: although the cheer be poor,

Titus waves an arm towards stage left.
Lavinia enters pushing in a trolley with a large pie. She is wearing a white dress under a white apron and her stumps have clean white bandages wrapped around them

'Twill fill your stomachs; please you eat of it.

Titus nods towards Lavinia and she moves to the side of the trolley. Lavinia picks up the knife by the hilt with her mouth. While she is doing this, Titus picks up Tamora's

plate from in front of her. Lavinia passes her father the knife and he cuts the first piece of the pie, placing it on Tamora's plate. He then moves to pick up Saturninus' plate

SATURNINUS
Why art thou thus attired, Andronicus?

TITUS
Because I would be sure to have all well
To entertain your Highness and your empress.

Titus places the plate in front of Saturninus

TAMORA
We are beholding to you, good Andronicus.

TITUS
An if your Highness knew my heart, you were—

Lavinia continues to push the cart along as Titus finishes serving everyone their supper. Lavinia and Titus stand to the side, watching everyone—while focusing on Tamora—eat the meat pie. A small smile spreads across Lavinia's face. Titus sees this and looks at Lavinia for a moment before he speaks

My lord the Emperor, resolve me this:
Was it well done of rash Virginius
To slay his daughter with his own right hand
Because she was enforced, stained, and deflowered?

Tamora looks suspiciously towards Titus

SATURNINUS
It was, Andronicus.

TITUS
Your reason, mighty lord?

SATURNINUS
Because the girl should not survive her shame,
And by her presence still renew his sorrows.

Tamora puts her hand on Saturninus's arm to divert his attention. He turns towards her, their attention drawn away from Titus

TITUS

A reason mighty, strong, and effectual;
A pattern, precedent, and lively warrant
For me, most wretched, to perform the like.

Titus looks towards Lavinia—a glint of a tear shines in his eye. As everyone continues to eat and converse with one another, the scene fades to silence. Lavinia stands upstage centre looking at her father. No one is paying attention to her except Titus. She turns towards the audience and stares at them for a long moment before speaking. When she speaks, no one but Titus hears her

LAVINIA

What shall[1] Lavinia speak? Love, and be silent?[2]
Unhappy that I am,[3] and though I have much to say
I cannot heave my heart into my mouth[4]
Can anything be made of this?[5]

She closes her eyes and wraps her dismembered arms across her chest, holding herself in a gentle embrace

O, woe is me T' have seen what I have seen[6]
I have not deserved this.[7]

"Thrash the corn, then after burn the straw,[8]
Make his dead trunk pillow to our lust,[9]
Let not this wasp outlive us both to sting."[10]

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[1] King Lear, 1.1.64
[2] King Lear,1.1.64
[3] King Lear, 1.1.93
[4] King Lear, 1.1.93-94
[5] Othello, 3.4.10
[6] Hamlet. 3.1.163-164
[7] Othello, 4.1.241
[8] Titus Andronicus, 2.3.123
[9] Titus Andronicus, 2.3.130
[10] Titus Andronicus, 2.3.132

She shivers

I have been broad awake[11] for many days
For I am haunted.

She chokes as her emotions take over and pauses momentarily to cover her face with her arms. Her tone changes

Marcus said, "Ah, now thou turn'st away thy face for shame"[12]
I know not shame, for rage is my only companion!

She angrily holds her arms up to show what is left of them

"Call for sweet water; wash thy hands,[13]
She hath no tongue to call, nor hands to wash;
And so let's leave her to her silent walks."[14]

"So, now go tell, an if thy tongue can speak,
Who 'twas that cut thy tongue and ravished thee."[15]

She desperately turns towards the table of people who do not notice her and screams

'Twas Chiron and Demetrius!
They ravished[16] me and cut away[17] my tongue[18]

She sobs

To draw apart the body…[19]
How foul a deed.

She positions her arms pleadingly

---

[11] Titus Andronicus, 2.2.17
[12] Titus Andronicus, 2.4.28
[13] Titus Andronicus, 2.4.6
[14] Titus Andronicus, 2.4.7-8
[15] Titus Andronicus, 2.4.1-2
[16] Titus Andronicus, 5.3.56-57
[17] Titus Andronicus, 5.3.57
[18] Titus Andronicus, 5.3.57
[19] Hamlet, 4.1.24

I begged them,
"Sweet lords, entreat her hear me but a word"[20]
Now my hands and my tongue are gone
Forever.

They took them from me
And yet, to you all,
I am the monster.

Lavinia turns her head towards Tamora

Tamora, you mock me,
"Alas, she has no speech!"[21]
Then poor[22] Lavinia
And yet not so, since I am sure my[23] hatred is
More ponderous than my tongue[24]
Why, stay, and hear me speak.[25]

She walks stage right to stand next to an unnoticing Tamora

I will never forget what thou hast done to me.
O Tamora, thou bearest a woman's face—[26]
But in truth,
You are the Devil himself.

I implored thee to be a gentle queen[27]
I implored thee to keep me from their worse-than-killing lust[28]
I implored thee to be a charitable murderer[29]

No grace, no womanhood…[30]
You and your wicked sons,

---

[20] Titus Andronicus, 2.3.138
[21] Othello, 2.1.102
[22] King Lear, 1.1.79
[23] King Lear, 1.1.79
[24] King Lear, 1.1.80
[25] Othello, 3.3.31
[26] Titus Andronicus, 2.3.136
[27] Titus Andronicus, 2.3.168
[28] Titus Andronicus, 2.3.175
[29] Titus Andronicus, 2.3.178
[30] Titus Andronicus, 2.3.182

You are men of stones![31]

All the infections that the sun sucks up
From bogs, fens, flats, on[32] Tamora fall and make[33] her
By inchmeal a disease![34]

Lavinia shoves the pie closer towards Tamora

Eat,[35] eat[36] this pie[37]
That holds my revenge.
Shall I deny you? No.[38]

She stands behind Tamora and screams

Eat[39] more![40]
It is a chance which does redeem all sorrows
That ever I have felt.[41]

Lavinia grows silent as her arms fall limp beside her and her gaze fades off into the distance. She starts to move downstage center

No, no, no…[42] that cannot be,
Not when Bassianus...
O, poor Bassianus.

She trips and awkwardly catches herself

He is dead and gone,
He is dead and gone;[43]

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[31] King Lear, 5.3.259
[32] The Tempest, 2.2.1-2
[33] The Tempest, 2.2.2
[34] The Tempest, 2.2.3
[35] Titus Andronicus, 5.3.54
[36] Titus Andronicus, 5.3.54
[37] Titus Andronicus, 5.3.60
[38] Othello, 3.3.86
[39] Titus Andronicus, 5.3.54
[40] Hamlet, 3.4.97
[41] King Lear, 5.3.268-269
[42] King Lear, 5.3.307
[43] Hamlet, 4.5. 29-30

He hath importuned me with love in honorable fashion— [44]
With almost all the holy vows of heaven.[45]
Now he is dead and gone[46]

I cannot choose but weep to think
they would lay him i' th' cold ground.[47]
At his head[48] no grass-green turf,[49]
At his heels[50] no stone.[51]

And will he not come again?
No, no, he is dead…[52]
He never will come again.[53]

To think that his body lays
In some loathsome pit
Where never man's eye may behold[54] him
He is dead as earth—[55]

Lavinia forces herself to her feet as Titus moves towards her to help her up. She pays him no attention as he assists her

O, what a rash and bloody deed is this![56]
No more![57]

Heavenly powers, restore him![58]
Why should a dog, a horse, a rat have life,
And he no breath at all?[59]

---

[44] Hamlet, 1.3.110-111
[45] Hamlet, 1.3.114
[46] Hamlet, 4.5. 30
[47] Hamlet, 4.5.69-70
[48] Hamlet, 4.5.31
[49] Hamlet, 4.5.31
[50] Hamlet, 4.5.32
[51] Hamlet, 4.5.32
[52] Hamlet, 4.5.189-190
[53] Hamlet, 4.5.192
[54] Titus Andronicus, 2.3.176-177
[55] King Lear, 5.3.263
[56] Hamlet, 3.4.29
[57] Hamlet, 3.4.103
[58] Hamlet, 3.1.143
[59] King Lear, 5.3.308-309

Lavinia pushes her arm against her chest

Had I your tongues and[60] arms

She holds both her arms up

I'd use them so
That heaven's vault should crack.[61]

Lavinia motions trying to pry something open

But, alas, I am helpless now.
My heart's subdued[62]

Her arms drop beside her, but her face remains looking upwards

He is gone forever.[63]

If words be made of breath
And breath of life,
I have no life to breathe[64]
For 'tis not life that I have begged so long;
Poor I was slain when Bassianus died.[65]

Lavinia lowers her gaze from the sky and turns towards her father

My noble father, I do perceive here a divided duty.
To you I am bound for life and education.
My life and education both do learn me
How to respect you.
You are the lord of duty.
I am hitherto your daughter.
But here's my husband.[66]

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[60] King Lear, 5.3.260
[61] King Lear, 5.3.260-261
[62] Othello, 1.3.245
[63] King Lear, 5.3.261
[64] Hamlet, 3.4.198-199
[65] Titus Andronicus, 2.3.170-171
[66] Othello, 1.3.179-183

My poor Bassianus.
By his dear absence. Let me go with him[67]

Titus's eyes fill with tears and Lavinia looks away from him

You once said,
"Lavinia, live, outlive thy father's days"[68]
But, alas, I cannot.
I have become your shame.

They broke me,
But t'was I who broke your heart.

Nor would I there reside
To put my father in impatient thoughts
By being in his eye[69]

Titus rushes towards Lavinia and holds her in a deep embrace as he silently weeps

I will not stay to offend you[70]

After a moment, Lavinia looks up at Titus' face and lifts her arm to wipe away the tears lingering on the side of his cheek

Do not cry, my dear father.
Tis present death I beg,[71]
For my father's sake.[72]
And with thine own hands kill me in this place![73]

She places her arms on top of both his hands

Let me die[74]

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[67] Othello, 1.3.254
[68] Titus Andronicus, 1.1.170
[69] Othello, 1.3.237-239
[70] Othello, 4.1.248
[71] Titus Andronicus, 2.3.173
[72] Titus Andronicus, 2.3.158
[73] Titus Andronicus, 2.3.169
[74] Romeo and Juliet, 5.3.175

For all that lives must die[75]
I am no different.
I know when one is dead and when one lives.[76]
And this is not living.

When I am dead and gone,
No warmth, no breath shall testify[77] I live.
The roses in[78] my lips and cheeks
shall fade[79] to paly ashes.[80]
My eyes' windows fall.[81]
Each part, deprived of supple government,[82]
Shall, stiff and stark and cold.[83]

Lord, we know what we are but know not what we may be.[84]

Lavinia looks towards Tamora for a long moment. She watches as Tamora is served a second piece of pie

O, heaven forgive us! [85]

She looks back at her father's face

In peace and honor live Lord Titus long;

Titus falls to his knees overcome with emotion

My noble lord and father, live in fame.[86]
Titus, live, outlive thy[87] daughter's days[88]

---

[75] Hamlet, 1.2.72
[76] King Lear, 5.3.261
[77] Romeo and Juliet, 4.1.100
[78] Romeo and Juliet, 4.1.101
[79] Romeo and Juliet, 4.1.101
[80] Romeo and Juliet, 4.1.102
[81] Romeo and Juliet, 4.1.102
[82] Romeo and Juliet, 4.1.104
[83] Romeo and Juliet, 4.1.105
[84] Hamlet, 4.5.43-44
[85] Othello, 4.2.87
[86] Titus Andronicus,1.1.161
[87] Titus Andronicus, 1.1.170
[88] Titus Andronicus, 1.1.170

She pauses to kneel down and embrace Titus

Lo, at this tomb
My tributary tears I render for my[89] own obsequy.

Lavinia crosses her arms over her chest and leans back into her father's arms

And at thy feet I kneel, with tears of joy
Shed on this earth for [90] my return to Rome.
O bless me here with thy victorious hand,
Whose fortunes Rome's best citizens applaud.[91]

She looks up at Titus's face

Farewell, my lord.[92]

Lavinia's eyes erupt with tears. A brilliant smile grows on her face. Titus closes his eyes and holds Lavinia close to his chest. He strokes the side of her face gently. From his pocket, he draws a knife and positions it above Lavinia's chest. She closes her eyes

TITUS
Die, die, Lavinia, and thy shame with thee,
And with thy shame thy father's sorrow die.

Titus sobs and stabs Lavinia in the chest. Her eyes flash open in pain. Blood gushes forth from the wound. Titus drops the knife abruptly and cradles Lavinia's body in his arms as he shakes and sobs. He rocks her body in his arms. Tamora sees this happen and drops her wine. Everyone at the table turns towards this spectacle. Lavinia holds onto his arms weakly as her blood pools around her. Most of her dress is crimson now. Her eyes stay locked with Titus's

SATURNINUS
What hast thou done, unnatural and unkind?

Titus speaks through tears, his gaze never leaving Lavinia's

[89] Titus Andronicus, 1.1.162-163
[90] Titus Andronicus, 1.1.164-165
[91] Titus Andronicus, 1.1.166-167
[92] Othello, 3.3.86

TITUS

Killed her for whom my tears have made me blind.
I am as woeful as Virginius was,
And have a thousand times more cause than he
To do this outrage, and it now is done.

SATURNINUS

What, was she ravished? Tell who did the deed

Titus lays Lavinia on the ground and slowly gets up. Tamora, startled, takes a step back. She looks from Lavinia to Titus in horror. Titus walks towards the pie cart and aggressively puts a slice of pie on a plate and holds it towards Tamora

TITUS

Will ’t please you eat?—Will ’t please your Highness feed?

TAMORA

Why hast thou slain thine only daughter thus?

TITUS

Not I; ’twas Chiron and Demetrius.
They ravished her and cut away her tongue,
And they, ’twas they, that did her all this wrong.

Lavinia, with a smile on her face, dies

SATURNINUS

Go fetch them hither to us presently

TITUS

Why, there they are, both bakèd in this pie,

Tamora walks towards the pie in disbelief

Whereof their mother daintily hath fed,

She shoves her hands in the pie and feels around

Eating the flesh that she herself hath bred.

Tamora's body stiffens as she pulls out a finger from the very middle. Her body shakes as a blood-curdling scream escapes her mouth. She begins to sob. Suddenly, Tamora holds her stomach as her body begins to lurch. After a moment, she begins to projectile vomit on the pie. Titus looks towards Tamora, his eyes filled with hatred. He gently picks up the knife that sits next to the pie

'Tis true, 'tis true!

He puts his arm around her shoulder and whispers into her ear

Witness my knife's sharp point.

Titus stabs Tamora in the chest and immediately pulls the knife out. Tamora stands still for a moment, staring at the gaping hole before she falls face first into the pie. Titus drops the knife beside him, he stares emptily at her corpse. Saturninus, horrified, lets out a wail of anger. He unsheaths his sword

SATURNINUS

Die, frantic wretch, for this accursèd deed

He stabs Titus in the stomach. Titus's body falls to the floor. With the last of his energy, Titus turns his face so that he can see Lavinia. A tear rolls down his cheek as his eyes glaze over

Chapter Two
Returning What Has Been Lost: The Writing Process

When reading *Titus Andronicus*, I always wondered what Lavinia would say, if given the chance. In the play, she never gets to verbally express herself because she does not have a tongue and thus is unable to vocalize what she thinks and feels. When adapting this play, I wanted to explore Lavinia's character as well as her need for revenge. After her violation, Lavinia is severely objectified and positioned as submissive. In the text she is often forgotten about and on stage her body is used as a theatrical spectacle. I have written a monologue and additional stage directions for her character with the intention of giving Lavinia more purpose, with my foremost intention being to give her a chance to symbolically reclaim some of the agency she loses when her hands and tongue are mutilated. When deciding where to set the monologue, I chose to place it after Titus's line, "for me, most wretched, to perform the like" (TA, 5.3.45), because I wanted Lavinia to have the opportunity to speak her piece before Titus kills her. I hoped that this placement would further emphasize the tender familial relationship that I believe exists between Titus and Lavinia. In the adaptations of *Titus Andronicus* that I have watched, Titus's relationship with Lavinia seems shallow. However, I see *Titus Andronicus*—and more specifically the feast scene which takes place in act five, scene three—as a wistful moment between a parent and his child, regardless of the fact that they are simultaneously seeking revenge against their common enemy. The revenge that takes place at the end of the play is not just Titus's, but Lavinia's as well. Creating an adaptation of this play has allowed me to explore ideas surrounding Lavinia's emotions, agency, and need for revenge. In doing so, I have created a monologue that once again gives her a voice.

I struggled with what side of the argument I stood on given the continuous debate on whether or not Lavinia wanted to die. In a recent article, Colleen Walsh defends the belief that Lavinia wants to live. While Walsh argues that Lavinia is an agent in the theatre of revenge (Walsh, 4), she argues that "it is very possible that Lavinia is an active participant in this system because she wants to live, which accounts for the unsettling impact of both her survival and her death on the audience" (4). I want to agree with Walsh, because I would prefer to believe that Lavinia does not want to die and is instead "a victim of it due to her father's obsession with the crime as one against him" (5), but I think this downplays Lavinia's characterization. Judith H. Anderson argues that "aside from revenge, it is realistically hard to see what she has to live for and easy instead to see why she might prefer death" (380). After re-reading the play, I realized that Lavinia clearly expresses her intent when she says, "for 'tis not life that I have begged so long; / Poor I was slain when Bassianus died" (2.3.170-171), and "'tis present death I beg" (2.3.173). Realizing this, I decided that in my adaptation I wanted to highlight Lavinia's agency to choose to die. Lavinia is not an object. My initial frustration with productions of *Titus Andronicus* is that Lavinia's agency is rarely highlighted; rather, she is objectified and used as a theatrical spectacle, as well as a symbol of shame. When Marcus brings Lavinia to her father after he finds her, he introduces her by saying, "this was thy daughter" (3.1.64) implying that because of what has happened to her, she is no longer the person she was. After seeing Lavinia, Lucien says, "ay me, this object kills me!" (3.1.66) directly referring to Lavinia's body as an object. I found these lines wildly upsetting and decided that in my adaptation, I wanted Lavinia to have the agency to choose what happens to her in the future. Anderson says, "in Shakespeare's *Rape of*

Lucrece, with which *Titus Andronicus* resonates variously and often, the raped protagonist, irrevocably shamed in her own eyes, commits suicide, something for which Lavinia, short of lingering starvation or escape to a cliff, needs help" (380). It is this idea of the raped protagonist having the ability to end her life that led me to believe that Titus does not ruthlessly kill his daughter; rather, it is an assisted suicide because Lavinia does not have the ability or opportunity to act alone. My adaptation offers the perspective of seeing Lavinia as a character capable of agency despite her subjugated and violated position.

Keeping this in mind, to begin the process of writing Lavinia's monologue I had to first identify what Lavinia would want to say if she could speak again. This foundation is incredibly important since this character does not have the agency to express herself. I wanted to prioritize the topics that I believe tormented Lavinia in her silence. I conceptualized that the main things she would want to address would be the emotions she could not verbally express such as her pain, anger, and sorrow. I narrowed these abstract concepts down to four concrete ideas: her initial thoughts on what has happened to her, her anger towards Tamora, her grief for Bassianus, and finally, her acceptance of death and her farewell to her father.

As previously mentioned, in the play, Lavinia never gets to express her own feelings. The men around her constantly assume her feelings for her and I am certain that must have made her feel defeated. It is because of this that I think she would prioritize vocalizing her feelings as well as her frustration over people constantly assuming things for her. In particular, I wondered how Lavinia truly felt when Marcus found her after her assault. Anderson argues that "[Marcus's] speech in *Titus* … has generally caused the

strongest assertions about the disparity between poetic rhetoric, especially metaphorical symbolism, and the staged presence of brutal, physical violence and human suffering" (362). Marcus's speech is problematic because his words objectify Lavinia. He says, "yet do thy cheeks look red as Titan's face, / Blushing to be encountered with a cloud. / Shall I speak for thee, shall I say 'tis so?" (TA, 2.4.31-33). Since she cannot tell him how she is feeling, Marcus assumes that Lavinia's face is red because she is blushing, rather than questioning if it is because of the physical toll that her body has taken during her rape and mutilation. As Anderson puts it, "all these observations about Lavinia's suffering and loss … focus attention on Marcus, however, minimizing or neglecting his muted niece. He alone speaks, yet she is present and conscious, undeniably so" (365). Marcus's speech is a crucial moment in the play because it is the first of many times that Lavinia will have her feelings assumed for her by the men around her. Although she has suffered brutal violations, her suffering is prolonged because "immediately, near simultaneously, she is understood also to embody the loss of speech, language, and agency" (Anderson, 360). I do not believe that Marcus's intention is to be harmful, rather I agree with Anderson's observation that "he has also to speak for the tongueless Lavinia. In returning words to her, if only vicariously, he is also restoring to her something of a human voice" (371). The problem with this statement is, "too readily or steadily seeing her as object, however, risks not making enough imaginative effort to infer and respond to her feelings and her point of view, as, through Marcus' words, the text implies and conveys them" (Anderson, 369). Lavinia inevitably becomes objectified during Marcus's speech because he takes claim of her agency. Although his concern and sympathy for Lavinia is real, this speech both draws unwanted attention to her broken body and centres

Marcus's feelings, rather than Lavinia's. His speech is useful as a descriptive tool but fails to capture Lavinia's feelings. It is because of this misinterpretation in the text that I wanted to give Lavinia the opportunity to vocalize her own pain and suffering, as well as her feelings of frustration, pity, and discontentment.

Furthermore, while watching her revenge on Tamora unfold, I believe Lavinia would want to express her anger towards the Goth queen for commanding her sons to assault her. Especially given that Tamora is a fellow woman and knows the ramifications that her actions will have for Lavinia. When Tamora says, "revenge it as you love your mother's life, / Or be you not henceforth called my children" (TA, 2.3.114-115), she instigates what happens to Lavinia and makes her part of the war between the Goths and her father. In addition to this, it is Tamora's command that leads to Bassianus's death at the hands of Chiron and Demetrius. Before her assault, Lavinia attempts to plead with Tamora to have mercy on her, but Tamora's resolution is firm. Lavinia is shocked at Tamora's willingness, as a woman, to weaponize the very patriarchy which oppresses her in an effort to brutalize another woman for her own personal gain. When Lavinia says, "O Tamora, thou bearest a woman's face" (2.3.136), and "no grace? No womanhood?" (2.3.182), she expresses that as a fellow woman, Tamora should acknowledge the profound implications of rape. Lavinia deduces that Tamora's lack of sympathy for her makes Tamora more masculine than feminine. It is only natural that Lavinia feels a seething anger towards the woman who allows her sons to harm her. As Deborah Willis identifies, feminist critics tend "to downplay women's participation in revenge, emphasizing instead their role as victim" (22) and this seems to be a common interpretation when reading the play, given that the feast scene is usually seen as being

"Titus' revenge" (Anderson, 376). My adaptation explores the idea that the feast scene in act five, scene three is not just Titus's revenge scene, but also Lavinia's. Rather than framing it this way, in the text "her active participation in her family's revenge plot in Acts 3 through 5 are either ignored or viewed as imposed on her; and Titus and the other male members of his family are represented as reducing Lavinia to an object, silencing her, or subjecting her to a patriarchal script" (Willis, 22). I believe this view is extremely problematic because it gives the impression that because Lavinia has been mutilated, she is diminished, and deprived of agency. Willis highlights that the violence of revenge is seen as "a purely 'male' problem or an effect of patriarchy" (22) whereas "women are the nonviolent sex, far more likely to be victims of violence than its perpetrators" (22), which plays into the limited Western binary of men being hyper-aggressive and women being hyper-submissive. I wanted to break this binary in my adaptation by emphasizing Lavinia's need for revenge. In addition to this, Lavinia's revenge on Tamora is an inversion of another aspect of their shared femininity. Tamora is a mother, and has the maternal instinct to protect, and care for her children. Lavinia and Titus defile her maternal status by persuading her to consume the sons she nurtured. Although the war is initially between Titus and Tamora, Lavinia's assault, and her need for revenge turns the war into a battle of feminine corruption.

Alongside Lavinia's need for revenge, I also think it is important to give her the opportunity to properly mourn Bassianus. It can be argued that Lavinia's feelings for Bassianus are unclear in the original text. In act one, after Saturninus proposes marriage to Lavinia, Bassianus seizes Lavinia, and says, "Lord Titus, by your leave, this maid is mine" (1.1.279). Arguably, this could be interpreted as him seizing her as a right—as

property already exchanged. Saturninus accuses Bassianus of rape when he says, “traitor, if Rome have law or we have power, / Thou and thy faction shall repent this rape” (1.1.406-407). To which Bassianus replies, “rape call you it, my lord, to seize my own, / My true betrothed love, and now my wife?” (1.1.408-409). Bassianus’s lines indicate that he and Lavinia were engaged prior to Saturninus’s proposal to her and now they are married. Bassianus states that he did not seize her in order to rape her but rather to marry her, which according to him, was always his intention. In my understanding of the play, Bassianus and Lavinia are truly in love, their marriage is not imposed on her. Saturninus accuses Bassianus of rape—the Latin word *stuprum* means both sexual violation but also a violation of property. Lavinia never accuses Bassianus of this. But Lavinia does use the word in act four when she writes, “Stuprum. Chiron. Demetrius” (4.1.78) in the dirt with the staff in her mouth. Lavinia is not so weak-willed that she would go along with Bassianus’s whims, she is a strong headed woman and proves this throughout the play. After their marriage, Lavinia and Bassianus enter the forest and encounter Tamora who has just been abandoned by Aaron, the father of her unborn child. As Aaron states, “madam, though Venus govern your desires, / Saturn is dominator over mine” (2.3.30-31), implying that although Tamora is looking for love, Aaron is too busy for romance because he is more concerned with wealth and politics. Thus, when Tamora encounters Lavinia and Bassianus, it hurts her to see them because they are clearly in love, and she longs for a love that she cannot have. In addition to this argument, as an adapter, this interpretation of Lavinia and Bassianus’s relationship is what I have chosen to use in my adaptation. I will talk about this further in chapter four. In line with the idea that Lavinia and Bassianus are deeply in love. In act two, scene three of the play, Bassianus is killed

but Lavinia does not get the opportunity to fully express her grief for his loss because she is in immediate danger of being raped by Chiron and Demetrius. After watching her lover get stabbed to death, Lavinia fears being violated by the same men who killed her husband and says:

> O, keep me from their worse-than-killing lust,
> And tumble me into some loathsome pit
> Where never man's eye may behold my body.
> Do this, and be a charitable murderer. (2.3.175-178)

She states that she would rather be thrown in the pit of dead bodies and left to die than be raped. In this moment, Lavinia's fear for her own safety outweighs her ability to fully mourn Bassianus's loss. After processing her assault, it is only natural that Lavinia would mourn all her losses, not just that of her tongue and arms but also the death of Bassianus. Although participants do not get to witness much of Lavinia's relationship with Bassianus, one of the last things Lavinia says is, "for 'tis not life that I have begged so long; / Poor I was slain when Bassianus died" (2.3.170-171), which illustrates a deep love for her husband. This line implies that the bond they shared was deep and meaningful and that his death is truly a great loss to her; so great that her life is not worth living without him.

Finally, Titus and Lavinia share a complicated relationship. Titus's sons are seemingly disposable to him, as made apparent when Marcus says, "five times he hath returned / Bleeding to Rome bearing his valiant sons / In coffins from the field" (1.1.33-35). Titus has taken his sons out into battle repeatedly, regardless of the fact that he has lost many children to these battles,

> Titus, unkind and careless of thine own,
> Why suffer'st thou thy sons unburied yet
> To hover on the dreadful shore of Styx?

Make way to lay them by their brethren. (1.1.89-92)

Titus acknowledges that he needs to bury his children. His only sense of taking care and being kind to his sons is having a funeral and burying them. He had no sense of care when it came to taking them off to warfare and because of this Titus's sons are seemingly disposable to him. On the other hand, Lavinia is Titus's only daughter and a symbol of his pride. Unlike the sons he takes into battle Titus wishes prosperity for his daughter as he expresses when he says, "Lavinia, live; outlive thy father's days" (1.1.170). Yet, in many adaptations I have seen, Lavinia's death feels rushed and I find that Titus and Lavinia's relationship comes across as superficial. An example of this is the staged performance of The Royal Shakespeare Company's *Titus Andronicus* (2017) directed by Matthew Woodward. David Troughton's Titus conducts the scene (found at 2:36.00- 2:39.39 in the official video recording) as if it is primarily his revenge that is unfolding, rather than that of Hannah Morrish's Lavinia. I found this troublesome considering that it is probable that Lavinia is suffering from PTSD after all the abuse that she has undergone because of her position as a pawn in a male dominant society. It feels like an injustice to ignore her role as a revenger alongside Titus. As Willis notes, "revenge acts as a container for traumatic emotion, enabling characters to bypass or transmute major PTSD symptoms such as intrusive recollection or psychic numbing, while also helping them recover a sense of agency, cohesion, and meaningful action" (32). Keeping this in mind, in my adaptation, I have focused on allowing Lavinia to reclaim some of the agency that she loses after her assault. Rather than placing Titus's plights above Lavinia's pain, like the text and some adaptations seemingly do, I wanted to highlight Lavinia's role as a fellow revenger in order to give her character more representation and purpose.

At 2:38.41 of *Titus Andronicus* (2017), Titus looks at Lavinia and discreetly nods before asking Saturninus about Virginius and his daughter. When Titus hears his response, he turns to Lavinia and sadly looks at her for a short moment before pulling out a knife and stabbing her. After stabbing her, his tone remains aggressive, and he turns his complete attention to the rest of the room. While speaking about what has been done to Lavinia, Titus occasionally glances briefly at her body, but never with the look or tone of grief that I imagined he would harbour after killing his only daughter. This being said, in the text Titus proves that he is capable of committing filicide, as demonstrated when he kills his son Mutius, "my lord, you are unjust, and more than so, / In wrongful quarrel you have slain your son" (TA, 1.1.295-296). As I have previously argued, Lavinia is dear to Titus in a way that his sons never were. Titus wants his daughter to live a long and fulfilled life. Lavinia is his pride and joy, so to be the person who has to end her life must be emotionally taxing for him. I want to see Lavinia's death staged in a way that captures the tenderness of their relationship. I think it is imperative to showcase that this is the greatest loss of Titus's life and that it is being done by his own hand. This scene is complex because Titus's grief and anger are colliding. Although I enjoyed watching The Royal Shakespeare Company's adaptation of the play, I felt that grief and loss were missing from the performance.

Another adaptation of *Titus Andronicus* that I felt did not quite capture what I envisioned the father/daughter relationship between Titus and Lavinia to be, was the cinematic performance of the dinner scene from *Titus* (1999), directed by Julie Taymor. When analyzing 2:23.57- 2:29:00 of the movie, my first critique is that Laura Fraser's Lavinia is not involved with the unfolding of what is supposed to be her revenge. The

revenge seems to be executed and enjoyed by Anthony Hopkins's Titus. Unlike The Royal Shakespeare Company's adaptation, in which Lavinia pushes the dinner cart, Titus enters the dinner scene with young Lucius pushing the cart with the pie on top of it. There is a long carnally satisfying scene of watching Tamora and the others eat the pie filled with the remains of Chiron and Demetrius. Lavinia witnesses none of this. After the dramatic montage comes to a close, Lavinia walks into the room with a black veil draped over her head. Her entire focus is on her father, which displays a sort of intimacy, but the relationship between Titus and Lavinia still comes across as superficial. When Titus says, "a pattern, precedent, and lively warrant for me, most wretched, to perform the like. Die, die, Lavinia, and thy shame with thee" (Taymor, 2:27.55-2:42.27), there is no grief or pain in his voice; rather he sounds emotionless. Once again, after reading the text, it is my belief that Titus should harbour more grief and sorrow in killing his daughter. In this adaptation, Titus breaks Lavinia's neck, which is an extremely physically and psychologically taxing act for him rather than stabbing her. I appreciate that Anthony Hopkins' Titus acknowledges Lavinia's presence, more so than David Troughton's Titus. I also appreciate that after he kills Lavinia, Titus continues to hold her body before gently lowering her to the ground and kissing her head. After he lays her to rest, his ensuing outburst more explicitly reflects how the loss of Lavinia is the focus of his rage. It is commendable how he captures that moment of tenderness and finality between father and daughter. This being said, I am still of the opinion that his performance is less personal than the original text implies.

In this regard, both the above-mentioned adaptations were beneficial in assisting my own staging of the play. I think as a whole, both adaptations are successful in what

they are trying to accomplish but their objectives differ from that of my own. For my adaptation, Titus—although the titular character—is not the main focus, and this is where most of my critique stems from. My main objective is to give Lavinia more purpose, as well as to put an emphasis on her humanity. I do not want Lavinia to be objectified as an obstacle that needs to be removed by Titus. Rather, I want to showcase the complex relationship between a father and a daughter that have suffered immeasurable trauma.

Knowing the topics I wanted addressed in Lavinia's monologue, I set forth to figure out how exactly I should write it, given that I do not want to put words in Lavinia's mouth that would do a disservice to her character. Lavinia has endured severe trauma. Her pain matters greatly but her character is unique because she has been silenced and cannot express herself. While trying to plan how to put an emphasis on her feelings, I was drawn to lines from other Shakespearean characters for inspiration. In order to appropriately write about Lavinia's pain, I used a mixture of lines from other Shakespearean plays, to create a 'new' dialogue. Shakespeare's dialogue is like a Lego set because he has many interchangeable lines. This method ensured that I created something that is entirely Shakespearean. I believe that this is the most appropriate way to write this monologue, as there are other Shakespearean characters whose emotions and situations align with that of Lavinia's. The characters that I have taken key lines from are Ophelia from *Hamlet*, Lear and Cordelia from *King Lear*, and Desdemona from *Othello*, among others.

Ophelia and Lavinia's characters are very similar because both women are ensnared in the power plays of other characters. Ophelia gets caught up in Hamlet and Claudius's power struggle. Additionally, her father's choice to side with King Claudius

and spy on Hamlet, the man she loves, inevitably leads to her downfall. Comparatively, the war between Titus and the Goth queen Tamora subjects Lavinia to a targeted act of revenge. It is because of these power dynamics that both women end up mourning the loss of a man. For Ophelia, it is her father who is killed by Hamlet and for Lavinia, it is Bassianus. Unlike Lavinia, Ophelia has the agency to verbally express her sorrow and she does so in a way that Lavinia is never able to do. Though she is able to speak, Ophelia is also similarly repressed because she is not permitted to express her emotions as she pleases. Thus, the way she mourns the loss of her father through song comes across as madness, when in reality, she is someone who has never been allowed to freely express herself because she has had to live according to her father's strict expectations.

As I have previously mentioned, Ophelia is a unique character because Shakespeare has given her the ability to sing, the ultimate form of voice. For the characters who are looking at Ophelia's mad spectacle, she appears to be singing as if in a trance. Although her songs are conveyed as a sort of riddle, Ophelia makes it undoubtedly clear that her singing is her way of mourning:

> He is dead and gone, lady,
> He is dead and gone;
> At his head a grass-green turf,
> At his heels a stone. (4.5.34-37)

Rather than openly speaking about her feelings, Ophelia uses riddles and songs to convey the complex array of emotions that she feels. This form of grief through song allows Ophelia to express her inner turmoil publicly, something that Lavinia cannot do.

Her expression of grief makes her the perfect character to draw lines and inspiration from to express Lavinia's love and loss of Bassianus. One such example is the line "O, woe is me / T' have seen what I have seen (3.1.163-164). This line is fitting and cathartic in

Lavinia's case because of the horrors she witnesses and experiences during her rape and mutilation. The rape scene takes place off-stage and off-page so no one witnesses the event. This line acts as a reminder that Lavinia is not only a victim, but the only witness to the horrors that Chiron and Demetrius commit. This line emphasizes that she has suffered immensely and gives Lavinia a moment to voice her discontentment.

Intermixing the lines where Ophelia expresses both her affection for Hamlet and her grief over her father's death are beneficial in creating a dialogue for Lavinia to express her feelings towards Bassianus. Taking lines from act one, scene three such as, "he hath importuned me with love / In honorable fashion—" (1.3.110-111) and mixing them with Ophelia's song, "he is dead and gone, lady" (4.5.29), creates a narrative for Bassianus and Lavinia's love. Lavinia speaks very highly of Bassianus, but their romance is never showcased in the play. The mixing of these lines creates substance and depth for their relationship and allows Lavinia to express that Bassianus was both an earnest lover and that his relationship with Lavinia was meaningful. These sets of lines mixed together allowed me to create a dialogue in which Lavinia is able to properly express her grief for her husband's loss. Another line that was perfect to incorporate into the monologue was "I cannot choose but weep to think they would lay him i' th' cold ground" (4.5.69-70). This line is useful because in the play, Bassianus's body is thrown into the pit filled with bodies (2.3). As his wife, this would naturally be upsetting for Lavinia because her husband has been murdered and never gets a proper burial. In continuation with this idea, Ophelia's lines, "at his head a grass-green turf, / At his heels a stone" (Hamlet, 4.5.29-32) allowed me to do some simple, yet impactful word play. Replacing the word 'a' with 'no' changed the entire sentiment of these lines. The line in my monologue is now, "at his

head [no] grass-green turf, / At his heels [no] stone." This allows for Lavinia to express her sorrow over the lack of a funeral and proper burial. The nature of Ophelia's lines and the relatability of her grief allowed me to draw inspiration to express Lavinia's unspoken grief.

When I first started writing the monologue, I wanted to primarily use lines from Shakespearean women. However, when I started to write the section about Bassianus's death, I realized that aside from Ophelia, King Lear was another important Shakespearean character who displays profound grief. In act five, scene three, Lear holds the dead body of Cordelia in his arms, and it is the most despairing Shakespearean scene. Immediately, I found the perfect lines to transition from Lavinia's anger towards Tamora to her pain over Bassianus' loss. The line, "it is a chance which does redeem all sorrows/ That ever I have felt" (King, Lear, 5.3.268-269), gave me the opportunity to demonstrate the complexity of Lavinia's anger. In my monologue, as she watches Tamora eat the pie filled with the flesh of Chiron and Demetrius, Lavinia becomes consumed by her rage and believes that this act of revenge may in some way heal her. This line is a key moment in the monologue because it captures the true extent of Lavinia's agony and need for revenge. Although Lavinia's sorrow and frustration is fundamental, her rage is a significant part of her pain and must also be expressed. I feel that Lavinia's rage is important to illustrate her further defiance of the notion that "women are the nonviolent sex" (Willis, 22).

An invaluable moment in *King Lear* that I wanted to incorporate into Lavinia's monologue is when Lear holds Cordelia's corpse and says, "why should a dog, a horse, a rat have life, / And thou no breath at all?" (King Lear, 5.3.308-309). This line embodies a

profound feeling of sorrow. It demonstrates the love and incomprehension associated with losing someone significant. I had to borrow this line for the monologue to express that Lavinia is mourning Bassianus because it gives Lavinia and Bassianus's relationship another level of emotional depth not captured in the original play. In a play in which many people have died, including her own brothers (TA, 1.1), Lavinia mourns Bassianus's loss above all else. It also gives Lavinia an aspect of selflessness because rather than spending the monologue talking about herself and what was done to her, she also mourns for what has been done to someone else.

When looking at act five, scene three of *King Lear*, I found lines I was able to manipulate in order to express Lavinia's grief such as, "had I your tongues and eyes, I'd use them so / That heaven's vault should crack" (King Lear, 5.3.260-261). For Lear, he says this because he wants to rip heaven apart to get his daughter back. I changed the word 'eyes' to 'arms' and immediately the meaning changed to represent Lavinia's feelings of hopelessness and sorrow because she cannot speak and she cannot act on her own in the way she was once able to before she was dismembered. Finally, I used Lear's line, "I know when one is dead and when one lives" (King Lear, 5.3.261), in which he confirms that his beloved daughter is dead. Lear uses this line quite literally; the way it is contextualized in my monologue is more figurative. I wanted this line to allow Lavinia to express her distaste for her situation. This is not the life she wanted to live. To Lavinia, what she has gone through is a price much worse than death and she communicates this by saying:

> 'Tis present death I beg, and one thing more
> That womanhood denies my tongue to tell.
> O, keep me from their worse-than-killing lust,
> And tumble me into some loathsome pit

> Where never man's eye may behold my body.
> Do this, and be a charitable murderer. (TA, 2.3.173-178)

Instead of having her request granted, Lavinia is raped, mutilated, and left to live in shame. Borrowing this line from Lear allows Lavinia to re-share her sentiment that she would have rather died than have her body invaded and destroyed. Although my intention was to only borrow lines from Shakespearean women, I could not bring myself to ignore Lear's lines because of how powerful and moving his grief for his daughter is.

Another character from *King Lear* that I looked to for inspiration is Cordelia. The line, "what shall Cordelia speak? Love, and be silent" (King Lear, 1.1.64) aligns with Lavinia's situation because she is silenced by patriarchal structures, although by different means. I wondered if given the chance to speak, would the words pour out of Lavinia's mouth, or would she hesitate? I decided that I wanted her to hesitate because Lavinia has learned what fear is and has lived through the vilest horrors. Her trauma cannot easily be explained. Even more so, she has lived in her own silence all this time. Thus, speaking again after not hearing her own voice for so long would be an unnerving experience. I wanted to capture this moment of hesitation. I changed Cordelia's line to read, "what shall [Lavinia] speak? Love, and be silent?" and I believe this to be fitting because she questions what she should say now that she is given the chance. In Lavinia's case, "love and be silent" is relevant because her family has already been hurt, thus should she remain silent so as not to hurt them further? They do not know the true extent of what she has gone through; they only know what she has been able to convey through her limited actions. In line with this sentiment, I used Cordelia's lines, "unhappy that I am, / I cannot heave / My heart into my mouth" (King Lear, 1.1.93-94). For Cordelia, this line is directed towards her sisters because they are being blandish towards their father in order

to ensure that they acquire some of his land. Their sentiments are laced with false flattery and selfishness, and this is very apparent to Cordelia. For Lavinia, I decided that these lines could be used to express how difficult of a topic this is for her to discuss. Lavinia has been severely traumatized. Conveying one's feelings ordinarily can be a feat but trying to do so after losing the ability to speak or to write with her hands must be overwhelming. Finally, the last of Cordelia's lines that I reworked were "since I am sure my love's / More ponderous than my tongue" (1.1.79-80). I changed the word 'love' to 'hate' and it inverted the meaning completely. Unlike Cordelia's inability to express her love, Lavinia's hatred for Tamora is immeasurable, far greater than any of her words might convey. Changing this one word made the line go from tender to loathsome. It greatly helped me in capturing the deep sense of resentment that Lavinia would feel towards Tamora. This made the scene in my monologue in which Lavinia watches Tamora eat the pie even more unnerving. It also emphasizes the feeling of retaliation that I wanted to capture in this moment.

Desdemona from *Othello* is another Shakespearean character who gets caught up in a power struggle. This time, the feud is between her husband Othello and the jealous Iago. Although the audience is aware that Iago is a scheming villain, Othello does not know it and is manipulated because of his ignorance. The person who suffers the most because of this is Desdemona. Desdemona's character was one I could not ignore because she demonstrates a Shakespearean father/daughter relationship. In particular, the lines,

> My noble father, I do perceive here a divided duty.
> To you I am bound for life and education;
> My life and education both do learn me
> How to respect you. You are the lord of duty.
> I am hitherto your daughter. But here's my husband (Othello, 1.3.179-183)

demonstrate the complexity of the relationship with her father. Desdemona, although acknowledging all her father has done for her, chooses her husband over her father. I see Desdemona and Lavinia as very similar characters when it comes to their relationships with their fathers. In my adaptation, Lavinia chooses Bassianus over her father's wish for her to marry Saturninus, and so too does Desdemona choose her lover over her father's wishes—without hesitation. For both women, the prospect of love in the first act of their respective plays outweighs their sense of daughterly duty. That is not to say that Lavinia and Desdemona do not love and respect their fathers, rather, they choose love over their duty to the patriarchy—both the family unit and their wider societies. For Lavinia's monologue, I wanted to rekindle a sense of Titus and Lavinia's bond. Although "Titus, unkind and careless of thine own" (TA, 1.1.86) is the reputation that Titus has, I wanted the relationship between him and Lavinia to be more gentle because she is his only daughter. Rather than manipulating or breaking apart these lines, I thought this passage was perfect for Lavinia's farewell to her father. In her monologue, although she wants to be with Bassianus, I wanted Lavinia to acknowledge the relationship and bond that she has with her father.

Desdemona has many short lines that I found fit the monologue. One such line is "alas, she has no speech!" (2.1.102). She says this to emphasize how quiet her attendant Emilia is. For Lavinia, I imagine that she heard variations of this phrase continuously as people discovered that she could no longer speak. I used this line in the context of her mocking these people. I phrased it as,

> "Alas, she has no speech!"
> Then poor [Lavinia]
> And yet not so, since I am sure my [hatred] is
> More ponderous than my tongue.

Desdemona’s line greatly compliments Cordelia's line because I imagine that Lavinia says “then poor Lavinia” as a form of mockery before expressing her deep hatred towards Tamora. I followed these lines by using Desdemona’s line “why, stay, and hear me speak” (3.3.31), with the intention of emphasizing that Lavinia’s anger has overcome her fear and hesitation.

Desdemona’s line, “shall I deny you? No” (Othello, 3.3.86) inspired me to write a cynical scene into the monologue. Desdemona says this line in response to Othello when he asks to be alone. She expresses that she would never deny Othello anything he wanted and leaves to give him space. In the monologue, the line is said as Lavinia watches Tamora eat the pie. Rather than being said in a dutiful manner like Desdemona, Lavinia will not deny Tamora another slice of pie because this moment is her vengeance. She wants Tamora to eat more because she gets satisfaction from watching her enemy eat her rapists—who are baked into the pie. Lavinia’s hunger for revenge makes this horrific scene that much more unpleasant, yet, at the same time, allows Lavinia to fully express her wrath.

Another set of lines that I borrowed from Desdemona are “nor would I there reside / To put my father in impatient thoughts / By being in his eye” (1.3.237-239). Desdemona says this after her father finds out that she is in love with Othello and he decides that he does not want her to live under his roof anymore. In Lavinia’s case, this line is useful because Titus feels shame for what has happened to his daughter and expresses this when he says, “die, die, Lavinia, and thy shame with thee, / And with thy shame thy father’s sorrow die” (TA, 5.3.46-47). It is undeniable that Lavinia feels shame for what has happened to her, as she expresses when she says:

> O, keep me from their worse-than-killing lust,
> And tumble me into some loathsome pit
> Where never man's eye may behold my body. (2.3.175-177)

Before her assault, Lavinia begs Tamora and her sons to throw her into the pit to rot because she would rather be left for dead than be defiled and have to live with that shame. After her assault, it is Titus who makes reference to her shame when he says, "die, die, Lavinia, and thy shame with thee" (5.3.46). In my adaptation, I did not want to highlight Lavinia's indignity because I felt that her shame was the main emotion that accompanied her in her silence and helplessness. It is the main emotion of Lavinia's that Marcus conveys in his speech, "ah, now thou turn'st away thy face for shame" (2.4.28). The audience knows that Lavinia has "undeserved but nonetheless deeply felt shame" (Anderson, 374), it is constantly emphasized. In my adaptation, I wanted to highlight that her anger, sorrow, and frustration are also important. This being said, while writing I could not ignore the aspect of Titus's shame because it is emphasized in the text. Upon seeing Lavinia, Titus says, "speak, Lavinia. What accursèd hand / Hath made thee handless in thy father's sight?" (3.1.68-69). Although his initial reaction towards Lavinia does not harbour feelings of shame, Anderson holds the belief that Marcus' lines,

> Come, let us go and make thy father blind,
> For such a sight will blind a father's eye.
> One hour's storm will drown the fragrant meads;
> What will whole months of tears thy father's eyes? (2.3.52-55)

imply that "the sight of Lavinia's outer loss of limbs will at least temporarily blind Titus to the full nature of her violation" (Anderson, 373). Anderson argues that Titus does not initially feel shame towards Lavinia, rather he develops that feeling after he realizes the true extent of her violation. It is because of this shame and sorrow of being perceived through the lens of her shortcomings, that Desdemona's lines, "nor would I there reside /

To put my father in impatient thoughts / By being in his eye" (Othello, 1.3.237-241) fit Lavinia because she does not want to be a burden to Titus and does not want her presence to continue to hurt him—especially given the sudden change in his nature. Although Titus says, "thy shame" (TA, 5.3.46), this message is never conveyed by Lavinia, rather it is a projection of his own feelings towards her. I wanted Lavinia to acknowledge this and react to it. I thought the line "nor would I there reside / To put my father in impatient thoughts / By being in his eye" (Othello, 1.3.237-239) helped to highlight this because Lavinia acknowledges all her father has done for her and is enduring for her sake. She does not want to be a constant reminder of pain for him. Another line of Desdemona's that further highlights this sentiment is, "by his dear absence. Let me go with him" (Othello, 1.3.254). Desdemona says this to her father, Brabantio, while she begs to be allowed to go to war with Othello because she refuses to be apart from him. Desdemona's dedication to her husband is a quality that I imagined Lavinia would have, given that she also expresses a deep loyalty towards Bassianus. After watching him brutally murdered and longing for death herself, I thought this line would aid in conveying Lavinia's feelings. Desdemona's relationship with her father provided me the opportunity to create a dialogue between Titus and Lavinia while showcasing the complexities of their feelings and their relationship with one another.

While reading Shakespearean plays to find inspiration for lines to use, I was drawn to Caliban from *The Tempest* because he is a character that demonstrates deep hatred. In particular, I was drawn to his lines: "all the infections that the sun sucks up / From bogs, fens, flats, on Prosper fall and make him / By inchmeal a disease! (The Tempest, 2.2.1-3). Caliban hates Prospero because he feels used and abused by him. In

this quotation, he wishes that all the diseases that breed in bogs and swamps will infect Prospero. Caliban's words and intentions are seething with loathing. In the same way that Caliban feels taken advantage of by Prospero, I imagine that Lavinia would possess a similar hatred towards Tamora—the woman who is responsible for all her woes. In a similar way, both Caliban and Lavinia have been made to feel like monstrosities by their respective antagonists and thus their anger is quite similar. It is because of this similarity that I felt it appropriate to include Caliban's lines into the monologue by changing the name 'Prosper' to 'Tamora'.

On the topic of Lavinia's agency and her love of Bassianus, Queen Gertrude from *Hamlet* says the lines, "if words be made of breath / And breath of life, I have no life to breathe" (Hamlet, 3.4.198-199). Gertrude says this after she witnesses Hamlet kill Polonius. Hamlet confronts his mother about the ghost of his father, his anger towards Gertrude, and her 'infidelity'. Gertrude is worried for her son's sanity and is pained by the harshness of his words. When pairing lines together, I found that this line greatly complimented one of Lavinia's when she says, "for 'tis not life that I have begged so long; / Poor I was slain when Bassianus died" (2.3.170-171), as both sets of lines fit together like a puzzle piece. Gertrude's lines imply that she does not have anything more to say. This ties in together well with Lavinia's lines because Lavinia states that she has not used her words to try and beg to live because she died when Bassianus did.

Death is an important factor I felt needed to be addressed in the monologue. Lavinia, wanting to die, does not fear death because in life, she faced far worse. Since in my adaptation death is the fate she chooses, I wanted her to emphasize that she has thought about it and that her decision is not impulsive or simply just for Bassianus's sake.

To demonstrate this in the monologue, I began by using Desdemona's lines, "nor would I there reside / To put my father in impatient thoughts / By being in his eye" (Othello, 1.3.237-239). These lines give Lavinia another motive besides Bassianus and her own suffering. At the beginning of the play, Lavinia is a symbol of Titus's pride. Titus himself makes this known when he says, "kind Rome, that hast thus lovingly reserved / The cordial of mine age to glad my heart!—" (TA, 1.1.165-167). After Lavinia returns to her father raped and mutilated at the hands of Tamora and her sons, she becomes a symbol of Titus's pain, "my grief was at the height before thou cam'st, / And now like Nilus it disdaineth bounds—" (3.1.72-73), as well as a focus for his own revenge. Titus has a history of being abrasive with his sons, but his affection for Lavinia is made clear as day and this is especially true after her assault. Although Titus has recently laid his sons to rest and has his own political matters to fret about, he says:

> But that which gives my soul the greatest spurn
> Is dear Lavinia, dearer than my soul.
> Had I but seen thy picture in this plight
> It would have madded me. What shall I do,
> Now I behold thy lively body so? (3.1.103-107)

He makes it clear that what has happened to Lavinia causes him more grief than anything he has gone through. He makes it known that Lavinia is the most precious person in his life. He loves her more than anyone else. I believe that hearing this would break Lavinia's heart. Although Lavinia disobeyed her father's wishes and ran away with Bassianus, Titus is very dear to her, and she does not want to cause her father grief by being a constant reminder of the pain in his life.

This being said, I think Lavinia's suffering would have taken her to a dark place in which she contemplates death and what dying entails. A Shakespearean scene that

masterfully describes death in considerable detail is in *Romeo and Juliet* when Friar Lawrence tells Juliet what will happen to her body after she consumes the sleeping potion that will make her appear to be dead. The friar says:

> No warmth, no breath shall testify thou livest.
> The roses in thy lips and cheeks shall fade
> To paly ashes, thy eyes' windows fall
> Like death when he shuts up the day of life.
> Each part, deprived of supple government,
> Shall, stiff and stark and cold (Romeo and Juliet, 4.1.100-105)

explaining in great detail how when Juliet dies, she will stop breathing, all the colour and warmth from her skin will fade and her body will grow stiff and cold. This scene is imperative in its respective play because it stands as a warning of what will happen to Juliet if she chooses Romeo over her family's wishes. As well, it foreshadows Juliet's death at the end of the play. Incorporating these lines into Lavinia's monologue is beneficial because in the context of her monologue, it demonstrates that she has thought about her mortality extensively and is not foolishly choosing to die without fully exploring her options and understanding what death entails. In addition, this description of death gives Titus something to think about because he is the one who has to kill Lavinia. Keeping with the idea of death, I used Ophelia's line "Lord, we know what we are but / know not what we may be" (Hamlet, 4.5.43-44) and Desdemona's "O, heaven forgive us" (Othello, 4.2.87) to demonstrate a different side of Lavinia's thought process. Although Lavinia has a deep need for revenge, she is not an evil character. At this moment, I wanted Lavinia to contemplate her revenge because she knows that actions have consequences and that she is running out of time.

I decided to use lines from *Titus Andronicus* as a form of repetition. After reading the play, it is undeniable that the plot comes full circle, as the end of the play mirrors its beginning. In the first act, Tamora begs for mercy for her son's life:

> Andronicus, stain not thy tomb with blood.
> Wilt thou draw near the nature of the gods?
> Draw near them then in being merciful.
> Sweet mercy is nobility's true badge.
> Thrice-noble Titus, spare my first-born son. (TA, 1.1.116-120)

Despite hearing her pleas, Titus's sons take Alarbus away and kill him. In the third act, the roles reverse, "thou hast no hands to wipe away thy tears / Nor tongue to tell me who hath martyred thee" (3.1.108-109). This time, it is Titus who fears for his daughter's well-being. When Lavinia returns to him raped and mutilated by Tamora's sons, unable to communicate who has assaulted her, Titus mourns the loss of the daughter he once knew. In addition to the parallels that exist, in the first scene, there is heavy foreshadowing. During the first act of the play, when Titus talks about his love for his daughter, he says, "Lavinia, live; outlive thy father's days / And fame's eternal date, for virtue's praise" (1.1.170-171). The irony of this line is that by the final act, Lavinia becomes a symbol of Titus's sorrow and does not outlive her father; rather she is killed by his hand. I was compelled by how this play's plot brilliantly came full-circle and started by foreshadowing the end of the play. I wanted to play with the idea of repetition in the monologue and decided to incorporate speeches from the first act into my adaptation.

The first set of lines I felt the need to repeat in my monologue were those of Chiron and Demetrius, particularly while Lavinia discusses her unspoken pain. As Willis explains,

> PTSD follows events that are “generally outside the range of usual human experience," such as rape ... and accidents or natural catastrophes involving serious and widespread physical injury. Such events, or "stressors," regularly produce a variety of related symptoms, among them "recurrent painful, intrusive recollections of the event" and "dreams or nightmares during which the event is reexperienced"; "'psychic numbing'"; sleep disorders; hyperalertness; irritability, anxiety, and depression. (26)

Having experienced being raped and incurring serious physical injury, it is likely that Lavinia experiences symptoms of PTSD such as having intrusive recollections of the event. Thus, I included lines from what her assaulters say to her before and after her violation. The first line I used was Demetrius’s, “first thrash the corn, then after burn the straw” (TA, 2.3.123), in which he states that he plans on first raping then killing her. I then referred to Chiron’s line, “make his dead trunk pillow to our lust” (2.3.130), in which he insists that they rape Lavinia on top of the body of her dead husband. Finally, I used Tamora’s line, “let not this wasp outlive, us both to sting” (2.3.132), in which Tamora allows her sons to violate Lavinia, as long as they ensure that she will be unable to tell anyone who has done this to her. These three lines summarize what has been done to Lavinia, as well as act as a reminder of who was involved in her assault. The lines also highlight the horror of the extent in which Lavinia was abused both physically and emotionally. The lines I used after Lavinia’s rape and mutilation are those of Chiron and Demetrius’s when they mock her disfigurement leading to her physical disability. Chiron’s mockery, “call for sweet water; wash thy hands” (2.4.6), is the first line I used from this section. Here, he makes fun of the injury that he himself inflicted on her. To

this, Demetrius replies, “she hath no tongue to call, nor hands to wash; / And so let’s leave her to her silent walks” (2.4.7-8), acknowledging what he and his brother have done. I also chose to include the lines, “so, now go tell, an if thy tongue can speak, / Who ’twas that cut thy tongue and ravished thee” (2.4.1-2) in which Demetrius taunts Lavinia about exposing who has violated her, while believing that she will be unable to communicate this information because they have cut off her means of communication. Chiron and Demetrius’s actions are inhumane as they treat Lavinia like an object to be dominated, destroyed, and ridiculed. I argue that if Lavinia could speak, she would convey the vile things Tamora and her sons said to her because their words and actions haunt her.

The final section of Lavinia’s monologue is her farewell to her father. It is my belief that the most fitting way to start this was by using Lavinia’s very first line in the play, “in peace and honor live Lord Titus long; / My noble lord and father, live in fame” (1.1.160-161). Regardless of all that has happened and all that has been lost, I wanted Lavinia to emphasize that her love for her father has remained constant. Knowing that she will die soon, I imagine that she would say these words in the hopes of comforting him, as well as wishing for him to be happy. I think part of the reason she wants to die is to free her father from his pain. In a way, Titus and Lavinia’s roles reverse by the end of the play. Titus believes that he will die first and says, “Lavinia, live; outlive thy father’s days / And fame’s eternal date, for virtue’s praise” (1.1.170-171). By the end of the play, it is Lavinia who bids farewell to her father and passes away first. It is because of this, that I rewrote Titus's line in Lavinia’s monologue to have her say, “[Titus], live, outlive thy [daughter’s] days.” Originally, when the words come out of Titus's mouth, it is a

blessing that a father wishes for his daughter to prosper and live a full and happy life. To hear the intentions that he made recited back to him by the daughter he loves, and is about to lose, is heart-wrenching. Not only is this moment painful because a parent is coming to terms that they are losing their child, but it conveys the deep respect that Lavinia has for Titus—because not only does she remember word for word what he wished for her—but she wishes the same for him. Additionally, when this line is said at the beginning of the play, it foreshadows Lavinia's death. The implied significance in this is that when Lavinia repeats the line in my adaptation, it acts as a sort of foreshadowing of Titus's death that soon follows Lavinia's. Another repeated set of lines that I used in the monologue is Lavinia's longer speech at the beginning of the play,

> Lo, at this tomb my tributary tears
> I render for my brethren's obsequies,
> And at thy feet I kneel, with tears of joy
> Shed on this earth for thy return to Rome.
> O bless me here with thy victorious hand,
> Whose fortunes Rome's best citizens applaud. (1.1.162-167)

In this speech, Lavinia bids farewell to her brothers as they are being laid in their tomb. Although she is sad, she cries tears of joy because her brothers are finally being laid to rest. This paragraph is fitting because at the beginning of the play, Lavinia prepares to lay her brothers to rest, but now, at the end, it is her turn to prepare for her own death.

Moving on to the more technical ideas of staging, an obstacle that I encountered was figuring out how Lavinia would deliver the monologue. Some of my early ideas were to have another actor come on-stage dressed as Lavinia before she was assaulted. However, it felt wrong because once again, another person would be speaking for Lavinia, and this is the opposite of what I was hoping to achieve. Even though it is technically herself, I thought about the physicality of Lavinia and felt that those words

should come from the person who endured the assault as opposed to an idyllic version of herself. I then considered having a voice-over recording of Lavinia's monologue played in the background as she reacted and physically embodied those words, but that felt a bit impersonal to me. In addition to this, Linda Hutcheon discusses Linda Serger's adaptation manual and draws attention to the fact that devices like voice-overs are disruptive "for they make us focus on the words we are hearing and not on the action we are seeing" (Serger qtd. in Hutcheon 54). This would be problematic, because it goes against what I am trying to accomplish in giving Lavinia the spotlight to be acknowledged both verbally and physically. It then occurred to me that I wanted this monologue to be an opportunity for Lavinia to speak her piece and it is not necessarily something I want everyone at the dinner scene to hear.

Again, I believe that *Titus Andronicus* is a play about a father and daughter with the feast scene being the climax of this sentiment. My intention with this adaptation is to give Lavinia's character more purpose. To solidify the intimacy of this moment, I felt that the words should come out of Lavinia's own mouth and be spoken solely to her father because this is a metaphoric moment between father and daughter. Another reason for wanting Titus to be Lavinia's sole spectator is because I argue that Titus is the only person who continues to see Lavinia as Lavinia and not the shell of who she once was. When Marcus brings the mutilated Lavinia back to her father he says, "this was thy daughter" (TA, 3.1.64), using the past tense to imply that she is not the same daughter he once knew. Titus responds, "why, Marcus, so she is" (3.1.65), using the present tense to emphasize that she still is his daughter regardless of what has happened to her. Yet, as Anderson suggests, Marcus's line, "come, let us go make thy father blind" (TA, 2.3.52),

suggests that “Titus will be figuratively blind to Lavinia’s losses, even when he does know their extent” (373). Titus, when he acknowledges Lavinia as his daughter, does not know the true extent of her violation. What he is acknowledging are her missing limbs because as a warrior, this is something he is familiar with (373). To Titus, there is honour in surviving a battle, but because of a patriarchal mindset, rape is “to be understood solely as a stain on patriarchal family honor” (Willis, 42). Keeping this in mind, when writing my adaptation, I questioned if Shakespeare suggests that Titus is only missing the opportunity to hear his daughter’s story because of her mutilation, or whether the text implies that even if she had the ability to speak, he would still be incapable of hearing her. I argue that it is Lavinia’s mutilation that prevents Titus from hearing her because “Titus struggles to find a way to hear her speak, learning from her a new language of gestures by observing her and miming her movements, receiving validation or correction from her” (Willis, 43). Titus makes a great effort with Lavinia, and this is something he does because he wants to understand her and cares about what she has to say. He could have disregarded or disposed of her sooner if that were not the case. Regardless of Titus's complex feelings towards Lavinia’s situation, “he has pleaded, wept, pitied, loved, jested, role-played, plotted, and outwitted his enemies, and wholly, kindly embraced his damaged daughter, becoming the means, indeed the very instrument, of her revenge” (Anderson, 382). As a product of the patriarchy, Titus is not a perfect father, or interpreter of Lavinia’s martyred signs. This is made clear when Titus says, “it was my dear, and he that wounded her / Hath hurt me more than had he killed me dead” (TA, 3.1.91-92) as this suggests that Titus is guilty of putting focus on how Lavinia’s trauma affects him; yet his love, and care for her is undeniable. Regardless of being the one who

inevitably kills her, “a pattern, precedent, and lively warrant / For me, most wretched, to perform the like” (5.3.44-45), Anderson argues that “the word ‘wretched’ credibly suggests not Titus's self-pity but his reluctance to proceed” (381). Given Titus’s affection for Lavinia, the reading of this line makes sense, as Titus would hesitate to kill the daughter he loves dearly and has struggled to try to understand. Anderson also suggests that Titus's words “thy father’s sorrow” (TA, 5.3.47) “seem to refer less to Lavinia’s shame as the cause of sorrow, hers and his, than to Lavinia’s embodiment of sorrow and Titus's abiding sorrow for his present action” (Anderson, 381). What I like about this idea is that it does not put Lavinia’s shame at the center of her killing. As her father, I believe Titus would take all of Lavinia’s feelings into consideration, not just her shame. His sadness would stem from the fact that his daughter has been irrevocably hurt, and no matter what he does, or how influential he is, he will never be able to fix that for her. Titus becomes an agent of revenge and death for Lavinia. Regardless of if he views the revenge as for his sake, his agency becomes a surrogate for hers. This being said, Anderson makes the argument that “there is little reason not to read Titus's last two lines as his assent to what his daughter wants” (381) and this perspective supports the idea that I made in my adaptation that Lavinia asks Titus to kill her. Anderson suggests that her death could be considered “an honor killing” (381) and based on the arguments that I have made about the intimacy of Titus and Lavinia’s relationship, this is credible. Following this trajectory, I believe that Titus cares about Lavinia more than anyone else and because of this, he is the only person who truly listens to her and can hear her monologue. The purpose of my adaptation is to give more empathy and agency to

Lavinia. In order to accomplish this goal, this reading of the text, as well as this version of Titus is what I require in order to support Lavinia and her voice.

On the topic of Lavinia's death, I want to discuss my decision in having my adaptation's Titus stab Lavinia instead of breaking her neck like the Titus in Julie Taymor's *Titus* (1999). When first watching Taymor's movie, I found that I appreciated that Titus broke Lavinia's neck because at the time, I felt Lavinia had suffered enough and that this mode was a quicker, more painless way to die. Ultimately, I thought it was merciful, but my opinion has since changed. As Anderson argues, Titus snapping Lavinia's neck "avoids the possible symbolism, especially in this play, of penetration with a father's knife" (381) which is a sentiment that I can appreciate, but to me, having her neck broken feels somewhat like an execution. With the idea of Titus being an instrument of Lavinia's revenge, I think he can also be an instrument of death, and in that same vein, protection. Lavinia does not have the means to straightforwardly end her own life, thus as previously stated, Titus takes on that role in accordance with his daughter's wishes. Being stabbed allows Lavinia to witness her revenge fully unfold, as I placed her death after Titus's lines, "not I; 'twas Chiron and Demetrius. / They ravished her and cut away her tongue, / And they, 'twas they, that did her all this wrong (TA, 5.3.56-58) so that she could hear her father publicly reveal the names of her assaulters and gain some peace in knowing that the truth was made known. In addition to this, as a fellow revenger, I argue that being stabbed is something of an insurance policy so she can lay witness to her revenge while ensuring that she does not end up at "the tender mercies of the imperial guard in the event that something goes wrong during Titus's banquet" (Anderson, 380). A slower death, such as being stabbed, allows Lavinia to continue to be

part of the revenge plot with the assurance that she will not be arrested for her hand in the affair.

Pertaining to Lavinia's physicality, I wanted to give her stage directions that allowed her to partake in her own revenge, as well as play with the idea of body horror, since it is so present within the play. *Titus Andronicus* has many elements of dark humour. One such example is when Marcus asks Lavinia to write the name of her rapists in the sand using a stick in her mouth,

> Write thou, good niece, and here display at last
> What God will have discovered for revenge.
> Heaven guide thy pen to print thy sorrows plain,
> That we may know the traitors and the truth (4.1.74-77)

and Lavinia writes Chiron and Demetrius's names. This scene plays with the notion of body horror/discomfort because as Anderson highlights, "Clark Hulse also remarks the erotic symbolism of the stick as fellatio but favours a connection between Lavinia's pose and the pun on a hell-mouth in 2.2.236 and thereby Lavinia's 're-enacting her own violation'" (Hulse qtd. in Anderson 378). This scene is especially disturbing because the audience does not get to view Lavinia's violation, so witnessing this re-enactment is a harsh reminder of what she has endured. Another example is when Titus instructs, "and, Lavinia, thou shalt be employed in these arms. Bear thou my hand, sweet wench, between thy teeth" (TA, 3.1.286-288) and Lavinia picks up his severed hand with her mouth. Anderson explores Jonathan Bate's idea that "the hand is not only a joke but also a meaningful emblem that shows Lavinia's role as 'handmaid to Revenge'" (376) which I found to be a captivating idea because her personhood is centralized. In picking up the hand, Lavinia centralizes her intentionality by showing that she is capable of performing

independent actions and so demonstrates her autonomy. Anderson makes a compelling case regarding Lavinia's character when she says,

> My other point pertains to Lavinia's character, of which our strongest if brief impressions before Marcus finds her in the woods have been formed by her choice of Bassianus over the Emperor and her father's wishes, once she has an actual chance to choose—thus her choice of love over imperial and patriarchal rule—and by the surprising sharpness of her wit in accusing Tamora of "horning," followed by the emotional outpouring of her desperate appeals for pity (2.2.67). Lavinia, although shamed and silenced, is not the passive object of domination that she is often taken to be. (377)

After her mutilation, Lavinia is seen as broken and silenced. Before her assault, regardless of living in a predominantly patriarchal society, Lavinia is a model of independence and fortitude. She is characterized as being well-spoken, resourceful and determined. I find it hard to believe that after her assault she would sit back and let things be decided for her without so much as trying to have a hand in her own fate. Inspired by the body humour that Shakespeare felt necessary in this play, I decided to incorporate grotesque stage directions into my adaptation that fit within the confines of the play, but also give Lavinia a sense of agency. During the dinner scene, Titus enters on stage with Lavinia close behind pushing the service cart with the pie on top of it. In my adaptation, it was imperative for Lavinia to be present and active in the scene. When Titus is finished greeting his guests, he says "twill fill your stomachs; please you eat of it" (TA, 5.3.29). The stage directions that accompany this line is Titus nodding to Lavinia, who picks up the serving knife by the hilt in her mouth and hands it to Titus. Lavinia has demonstrated

her capability of using her mouth as a surrogate appendage, so for the sake of dramatization and the need for her revenge, I argue that this stage direction is not unreasonable. Comparatively, in the original play, there is no explicit indication of how Lavinia reacts when she sees her revenge unfold. As a stage direction, after Titus says, "an if your Highness knew my heart, you were—" (5.3.34), I wrote that Lavinia subtly smiles as she watches Tamora eat the pie that her sons have been baked into. I felt that adding this into my adaptation added some depth to the performance. On the one hand, the intention of my adaptation is to highlight Lavinia and her feelings, and thus this stage direction allows her to relish in this moment of revenge. On the other hand, this stage direction adds another morbid layer to the text because Lavinia is openly taking pleasure in witnessing cannibalism occur right in front of her. Again, this play is about parents and their children. As I emphasized before, Lavinia loves her father and does not want to cause him pain, but in this moment, she has a hand in the plan that instigates another parent to eat her own children whom she loves. I believe that the main cause of turmoil in *Titus Andronicus* is the distinct lack of sympathy between characters, and this inevitably develops into a cycle of revenge.

Titus's lack of sympathy for Tamora's son Alarbus (1.1) inevitably leads to Lavinia's rape and mutilation (2.3) as "revengers seek to re-enact a traumatic scene with the roles reversed" (Willis, 33). Regardless of the dispute being between Titus and Tamora, "the violence of revenge swerves from its true target, requiring the sacrifice of innocents who function as props in the revenger's show, performed for an audience that includes the perpetrator along with the broader community" (33), which is why Lavinia gets ensnared in Tamora's revenge plot. Titus's need for revenge begins after Lavinia is

returned to him, raped and dismembered: “now it will be the enemy parent who experiences the vicarious suffering, the sense of powerlessness, the loss, the grief—in short the trauma—of seeing a child maimed or killed, while being helpless to stop it” (33). Titus and Tamora are characters who mirror one another because they “share a set of beliefs about honor and revenge” (30) and feel forced to take action when their respective children are injured and killed by the other’s hand. My suggested stage direction in which Lavinia watches Tamora eat her sons only further emphasizes this idea of a lack of sympathy, as it was Tamora who took on the role as a bystander while Lavinia was raped and mutilated. As Anderson argues, “Titus dies at the end, not for Lavinia’s death, but for Tamora’s, who, had she wished, could have pitied Lavinia” (382). As the only other woman in this play striving to survive in this male-dominated society, Tamora must fend for herself and her family. The politics in this play dictate that Tamora and Lavinia stand on opposing sides and it is because of this that Tamora cannot afford to pity Lavinia. It is important to note that Lavinia does not pity Tamora either:

> Under your patience, gentle empress,
> ’Tis thought you have a goodly gift in horning,
> And to be doubted that your Moor and you
> Are singled forth to try experiments. (TA, 2.3.66-69)

Rather than seeing herself in Tamora, as a woman who also values love over imperial and patriarchal rule, Lavinia chooses to antagonize her. Feeling cornered and fearing exposure, Tamora gets the aid of her sons to cover her tracks by getting rid of her witnesses. To this end, the lack of sympathy that the characters of *Titus Andronicus* have for one another inevitably transforms into a need for revenge and leads to the downfall of almost every significant character in the play.

Moreover, by piecing together specific lines from key Shakespearean characters whose situations align with that of Lavinia's, I have created a monologue that gives Lavinia the opportunity to express her many unsaid feelings of pain, frustration, anger, and sorrow. I have also rewritten most of act five, scene three to give Lavinia more stage directions and purpose. In doing so, I prioritized Lavinia's presence during the feast scene to ensure that she acts as a revenger alongside Titus. This is something that I felt The Royal Shakespeare Company's *Titus Andronicus* (2017) and Julie Taymor's *Titus* (1999) failed to execute in their respective productions. Willis highlights how women are seen in the subtext of historical records, "women are present not only as icons of chastity and victims of rape in vendettas and feuds but also as agents actively pursuing revenge" (24-25). To deny Lavinia, someone who has incurred severe trauma, the chance at revenge, or in viewing her hand in the revenge as being "imposed on her" (Willis, 22) becomes an injustice to her character. Lavinia, before her mutilation, is not viewed as weak or inadequate, rather, she is a model of independence and fortitude—a woman who is headstrong and chooses love over imperial and patriarchal rule. To view her as any less than that after her rape and mutilation is ableist and reductive. Lavinia's broken body is more than just a spectacle on stage and is not something that I wanted to neglect on the page. I have written this monologue in the hopes that it centres Lavinia's humanity and vital role in *Titus Andronicus.*

Chapter Three
Metamorphosis Under the Male Gaze

Rocco Coronato presents the argument that "both Caravaggio and Shakespeare adopt in their own varied ways, 'the indistinct regard'" (2) which he describes as "a gaze deliberately fixed on multiplicity, interdetermency, and indistinction" (2). Similarly, Lavinia embodies the indistinct regard through the complexity of the gaze that is fixed upon her. As Coronato argues, "her rape borders on the unrepresentable, her physical pain consciously becomes inarticulable, with a dramatic hiatus between the incisions in her body and the onlooker's voyeuristic, nearly obscene gaze" (54). Because Lavinia's hardships are so horrific in nature, the gaze that is fixed on her character becomes complex as she undergoes a metamorphosis after her rape and mutilation. This indistinction stems from Lavinia's metamorphosis, a transformation that places her in the category of 'other'. Lavinia, both physically, and socially, goes against the idea of 'the norm'. Her lack of speech, and her inability to sign traditionally makes her difficult to understand except for "a small community of interpreters … that lend voice to the mute subject" (Coronato, 55). Lavinia remains a mystery to anyone who does not come to understand her. Being such a unique character, whose identity after her metamorphosis exists in a grey area between the identities of monster and martyr, Lavinia is difficult to understand—difficult even to look at. Gazing upon Lavinia may remind one of Caravaggio's painting "The Incredulity of Saint Thomas" (1601). Body horror is a spectacle which is designed to elicit an almost visceral response in viewers when it is

performed or visualized. Caravaggio's painting exemplifies this by depicting St. Thomas sticking his finger inside of the resurrected Christ's wounds. In this painting, Christ's body, and more specifically, his injuries, are a visual spectacle to the eyes. Seeing St. Thomas's finger inside of Christ is an uncomfortable and gruesome image, and yet it is hard to avert one's gaze. In the same way, Lavinia's dismembered body is the theatrical spectacle of the play. When she is onstage, we as an audience are drawn towards her presence much like the finger entering the wound. This indistinct gaze that is fixed upon Lavinia is what makes her such a prominent theatrical spectacle as well as an interesting case study to try and fully understand.

Figure 1: Saint Thomas with his finger inside Christ's wound from: Caravaggio. The Incredulity of Saint Thomas. (1601), Sanssouci, Potsdam. https://www.caravaggio.org/the-incredulity-of-saint-thomas.jsp

When considering how and why Lavinia is represented this way, I found myself wondering what Shakespeare's attitude toward women was because I wanted to better understand his intention with Lavinia's characterization. Claire McEachern's essay "Fathering Herself: A Source Study of Shakespeare's Feminism" (1988) provides an idea of what stance Shakespeare might have had on the topic of feminism. As McEachern highlights,

> Until recently, feminist criticism of Shakespeare divided itself—and Shakespeare—into two seemingly incompatible ideological camps. Pioneering feminist forays into Shakespeare's canon, while seeking to "compensate for the

> bias in a critical tradition that has tended to emphasize male characters, male themes, and male fantasies" as well as to develop a uniquely feminist criticism capable of searching out "the woman's part," discovered in Shakespeare an apparent commitment to the portrayal of liberated female characters, strong in voice and action. Shakespeare here becomes a proto-feminist, testifying either to the Renaissance's general cultural emancipation of women, or to Shakespeare's own ahistorical transcendent genius, his freedom from his culture's assumptions. (269-270)

This idea of Shakespeare and protofeminism is something that I find particularly interesting, especially while observing *Titus Andronicus* from the lens of adaptation, because Shakespeare's writing, and more particularly—the complex relationships between the men and women in his plays—has opened doors for critical thinking and contemplation on gender roles and relationship dynamics. Shakespeare's works are designed to be adapted, which allows individuals to explore his characters from different feminist perspectives. This being said,

> More recent feminists have sought to escape the proto-feminist/patriarchal polarity, and have turned to an investigation of the often contradictory, competing play of cultural texts that generates it. In complicating the mimetic model of literary genesis, exploring the interconnections of text and context, and revealing the discrepancies between various cultural definitions of the woman's place, such work has revealed patriarchy to be hardly a monolithic, coherent entity speaking with one—either liberating or oppressive—voice, but composed of, indeed founded in, ideological contradictions, inconsistencies, and incongruities. As a

> consequence, it would appear that the woman's part, and the man's, are hardly essential and stable categories of identity but contestable and changeable social constructs. (270-271)

From a Neoliberal, hyper-capitalist perspective, where work is reduced via gendered lines, what McEachern sheds light on here is the important fact that the patriarchy, although dominant and overbearing, especially when focusing on its role in a family following the white, elite, Anglo-centric, Protestant model, is heavily dependent on the status of the family as a whole. As McEachern states,

> Patriarchy, then, is not seamlessly monolithic, as some fathers would have us believe, but rather is founded in a profound contradiction; it is this contradiction that Shakespeare explores, focusing on the moments of the intersection of political and familial loyalties, and examining our attempts to resolve or reject the conflicting demands that patriarchy imposes on us. (273)

Regardless of a father’s status as the head of his household, his place within the patriarchy is cemented by his financial and social status; however, it is the conduct of his family that shores up this position and ensures stability and longevity for his line because everyone, regardless of their gender, is complacent in perpetuating the patriarchy. McEachern, argues that,

> Shakespeare's experience and understanding of the pressures that patriarchy exerts upon its members enabled him to write plays that interrogate those same patriarchal systems. He developed this understanding by engaging with his artistic fathers and the cultural authority they represent and embody. In order to empower his own writing, Shakespeare rebels against the archetypes he inherits. (272)

In relation to this idea of the patriarchy as monolithic and when considering Shakespeare's plays through this use of theory, through his writing, there is evidence that Shakespeare questions aspects of the patriarchy and its foundations. One such point is the ways in which he explores the drastic difference between the roles of literary daughters and sons.

As Glen S. Holland emphasizes, "It has become commonly accepted in the last twenty years or so that the texts of the New Testament were written to be read aloud to an audience" (317). This idea of text being designed for performance is precisely what the intention with Shakespeare's plays are. Both the biblical texts and Shakespeare's plays are meant to be embodied. The New Testament is meant to be read aloud in the form of the homily during mass, and comparatively Shakespearean plays are meant to be performed and witnessed rather than read off the page. Despite what we know about Shakespeare, there is no reliable, concrete answer to the question of what Shakespeare's spiritual belief system was, but in the essay "Shakespeare and the Catholic Question" (1998), Burton Raffel emphasizes that given that Shakespeare lived and wrote for a living in an Elizabethan England, "no playwright, regardless of his beliefs and feelings, would have dared openly attack the Established Church, which would have been exactly the same as attacking the state and the Queen … but the Catholic Church was fair game for playwrights" (38-39). This being said, Raffel also highlights that "references to Catholics and Catholicism are considerably more frequent in Shakespeare's plays" (44) and thus, it is undeniable that within Shakespeare's plays, regardless of his personal beliefs, there is a great deal of biblical imagery within his work. In particular, with the theme of literary sons and daughters in mind, I see a fair amount of comparison between Lavinia and the

son from “The Parable of the Prodigal and His Brother” in Luke 15.11-32 referenced in the *King James Version* of the bible. This being said, though there are comparisons to be made, these comparisons are in degrees of severity rather than major incongruencies in content.

The parable begins with the story of a man and his sons. The younger son says “father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living” and once he is given his share, he leaves his family behind to start a new life (*King James Version Bible*, Luke.15.12-13). Much like how the prodigal son leaves his father behind, in my adaptation, Lavinia chooses to elope with Bassianus, rather than accepting Saturninus’s proposal,

> Lavinia will I make my empress,
> Rome’s royal mistress, mistress of my heart,
> And in the sacred Pantheon her espouse.
> Tell me, Andronicus, doth this motion please thee? (TA, 1.1.241-245)

Regardless of the fact that marrying Saturninus would comply with her father’s wishes, Lavinia chooses love. As McEachern emphasizes, “marriage enacts the exogamous valuing of women and thus exposes the patriarchal forms by which women are controlled” (272) and this idea of control is a condition that is exclusively assigned to women by their patriarchal figures. Historically, there has always been more pressure for women with the idea of marriage because,

> The marriage of a daughter is a difficult moment for a father, especially if he lacks a wife. He must move from the center of his daughter’s world to circumference and must watch another take his place. Lynda E. Boose points out that marriage is inherently subversive of a father’s authority in requiring that the daughter leave the father’s control. (272)

Thus, whereas having a son is treated as a legacy in order to keep one's lineage and family name in succession, daughters are treated under the pretense of ownership as if they are objects to trade.

In my adaptation, rather than offering herself up as a patriarchal sacrifice, Lavinia chooses her best interests over her family's by running away with Bassianus. Lavinia's decisions align with the mindset of the prodigal son, who also chooses his best interests over his families'. Away from the safety of their fathers' homes, both the prodigal son and Lavinia are exposed to inhumane behaviour. In the story of the prodigal son,

> when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him. (KJV, Luke.15.14-16)

Even though he is starving, no one offers him any food. Rather, they leave him for dead, treating their livestock with more consideration and dignity. His hunger is so severe that he considers eating pig's food to sustain himself. For Lavinia, the inhumane behaviour that she has to face is the extremely violent and lustful actions of Chiron and Demetrius. Regardless of the fact that Tamora's feud is with Titus, Lavinia is targeted by Tamora's sons. In the first act of the play, Tamora vows:

> I'll find a day to massacre them all
> And raze their faction and their family,
> The cruel father and his traitorous sons,
> To whom I sued for my dear son's life,
> And make them know what 'tis to let a queen
> Kneel in the streets and beg for grace in vain. (TA, 1.1.459-464)

Tamora’s son Alarbus is killed on Titus's command and because of this, Lavinia’s rape and mutilation become an extension of Tamora’s revenge against Titus.

Both the prodigal son and Lavinia suffer as a result of the decisions they make. For the prodigal son, it is his greed and thriftless actions that lead him to leave the comfort of his father’s house and spend his entire inheritance thoughtlessly. For Lavinia, it is her antagonization towards the Goth queen that leads Tamora to command her sons: “and had you not by wondrous fortune come, / This vengeance on me had they executed. / Revenge it as you love your mother’s life” (2.3.112-114). Following their mother’s command, Chiron and Demetrius proceed to stab Bassianus and ravage Lavinia, leading to both an incomprehensible physical and emotional violation for her. Finally, at the culmination of their suffering, the prodigal son and Lavinia return home to their fathers. The prodigal son chooses to return home because he can no longer support himself, but he knows that his father is a good man who can provide for him. He demonstrates this when he says, “how many hired servants of my father’s have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger” (KJV, Luke.15.17). This acknowledgement leads the son to return home because he has nothing left, but knows his father will not deny him, at the very least, the comfort to survive. When the son returns home,

> and he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put *it* on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on *his* feet: And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill *it*; and let us eat,

> and be merry: For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry. (KJV, Luke.15.20-24)

Seeing that his son has suffered a great loss, regardless of the fact that it is at his own expense, the father still welcomes his child with open arms. It is important to note that the losses that the prodigal son experiences are far less severe than that of Lavinia's losses. Whereas the prodigal son loses money, weight, and some of his pride, Lavinia loses her husband, and more significantly, her hands and her tongue—thus her ability to communicate and have the agency to act independently.

Like the prodigal son, Lavinia also returns to Titus after experiencing great misfortune. Whereas the prodigal son returns to his father out of his own desperation, Lavinia is brought to her father by her uncle Marcus "come, let us go and make thy father blind / ... What will whole months of tears thy father's eyes? / Do not draw back, for we will mourn with thee" (TA, 2.4.52-56). Although Lavinia feels embarrassed and vulnerable, this section of Marcus's speech is one that I can appreciate because he tells her not to run away, but rather to return with him to her family so that they can mourn with Lavinia, as well as be her support. As Willis highlights,

> When family members are murdered, raped, or severely injured—which, in *Titus Andronicus*, are regularly recurring events—the other members of the family also feel damaged, as if a part of the self has been lost or killed along with the family member. The enhanced, family-based group identity that anchors individual self-image comes under attack, its honor put in question. (30)

Lavinia's rape and mutilation will inevitably lead to hurting her father and the rest of her family, not only emotionally, but also socially and politically. In her silence, I believe

Lavinia is aware of this because before her assault, she demonstrates having a lot of pride because of who her father is. Knowing the regard in which her father holds her, I think Marcus's line "do not draw back" (TA, 2.4.56), when embodied, shows how Lavinia does not want to go with Marcus because she fears for what her father's reaction will be. Willis argues that the children in this play, "are also anchors of identity for the parents, selfobjects vitally connected to the parent's own social status, self-image, and emotional stability" (31). Thus, going home to her father in this state will surely play a large role in his downfall. Even more so than how her newly broken body will affect her father's feelings, there is also the matter of "Lavinia's sadly realistic fear that she will be blamed for her own rape" (Anderson, 372) which was not uncharacteristic for the time period in which the play takes place. In spite of all of Lavinia's fears, when Marcus brings the broken Lavinia home to her father, Titus acknowledges Lavinia and her brokenness and says "give me a sword. I'll chop off my hands too" (TA, 3.1.74). While to some, it may appear that Titus is trying to somehow ease her feelings of suffering and otherness by inflicting pain on himself, Titus's actions here are arguably quite selfish. He is metaphorically putting his hand in Lavinia's mouth by offering to cut off his hand—an action that will in no way benefit Lavinia—centering himself in this scene, and drawing attention to his pain, which takes the focus off of Lavinia and her afflictions. In a way he puts the blame of his suffering on her lips. This is before Lavinia literally ends up with Titus's hand in her mouth, when he commands, "bear thou my hand, sweet wench, between thy teeth—" (3.1.287-288). In the same scene, Titus has gone from expressing pity for Lavinia, to commanding her to pick up his severed hand in her mouth, an action that is both inconsiderate and dehumanizing, especially given Lavinia's circumstances.

Lavinia is a prodigal daughter, or rather, she becomes something more of a son than a daughter to Titus because of her losses. The prodigal son from the parable did indeed exploit his father's kindness, but whereas a son is a temporary failure—because one can make up for lost money by simply earning more—from a patriarchal standpoint, Lavnia's virtue cannot be returned. The difference between the parable's son, and Lavinia—or rather, of sons, and daughters in this context—is that the possession of finance can be regained over time, but the possession of honour is something that cannot be returned or regained. Because of her violation, Lavinia is viewed as something of a spoiled good, whereas the prodigal son can still redeem himself. There is a marked difference in consequence between literary women and men when it comes to the topic of disobeying or deviating from one's father.

Lavinia as Monstrous

Returning to the idea of Lavinia's indistinction because of the nature of her metamorphosis, she is a fascinating case study when trying to firmly position her in the category of monster or martyr. At the beginning of the play, Lavinia is characterized as desirable, and as a woman of great honour. After her assault, she is othered because of her mutilation and her representation in some adaptations is conveyed as monstrous—unnecessarily so. In Taymor's *Titus* (1999), when Marcus finds Lavinia, she is standing on a tree stump in a white dress covered in blood. The background music of this scene is ominous, and the atmosphere is almost stormy. As Marcus draws closer to Lavinia, attention is drawn towards her wrists because there are branches in her stumps, which further dramatizes how unnatural her situation is. As Lavinia raises her stumps and the

branches beside her, she opens her mouth and a stream of blood flows out (1:06:45-1:07:40). The way this scene is adapted makes it look like something out of a horror movie. Even without the tree branches, the way this scene is set highlights Lavinia's new status as the monstrous other. As Shannon Emmerichs emphasizes, "Lavinia transforms into one of the most visible monsters of Shakespeare's canon of women, with her hands 'lopp'd and hew'd' (2.4.17) from her body and her tongue cut from her mouth" (94), and although the audience's sympathies are with Lavinia, the gaze on her borders on indistinction because her situation seems unnatural to the normative body. It is because of her severe disfigurement that she "went from being the idealized woman and daughter—obedient, full of filial piety, loyal and chaste—to an abomination of nature that must be destroyed" (94).

Figure 2: Julie Taymor's Lavinia from Titus (1999)." Film Freedonia, https://filmfreedonia.com/2009/05/12/titus-1999/. Accessed 31 May 2022.

This idea of the feminine fall from grace which converts into monstrosity is not a new theme; rather it is a historically prevalent theme that has been repeated many times. Take for example the Greek myth of Medusa. She aligns with this notion of created- monstrosity, as like Lavinia, Medusa too is "a victim of metamorphosis" (Coronato, 78). In 1598, Caravaggio painted the "Head of Medusa," the gory image captures Medusa's decapitated head looking in horror. Medusa is best known for

Figure 3: Decapitated head of Medusa from: Caravaggio. Head of medusa. (1597)

"having hair made of snakes and for her ability to turn anyone she looked at to stone, literally to petrify" (Glennon, 2017), but Ovid describes Medusa as being "a nymph most envied for her clearest beauty … whose best part was her hair" (Coronato, 78). According to the tale, she is raped by Poseidon in the temple of Athena (78) and "such a sacrilege attracted the goddess' wrath, and she punished Medusa by turning her hair to snakes" (Glennon, 2017). Like Lavinia, Medusa, in the beginning of her myth, is described as being a feminine figure "most envied for her clearest beauty" (Coronato, 78). Yet, after her rape—an action completely against her will—she is the one who is blamed for the act. As a form of punishment Medusa undergoes a metamorphic transformation, and though she is "a victim of violation, Medusa both displays the terrible violence she suffered and threatens her beholders with terror" (78). Whereas Lavinia's severed hands and the loss of her tongue are the physical symbols that other her, for Medusa, it is the snakes that make up her hair that place her in that same category. Both these sets of signifiers exist because these symbols "(deform) illustrious women once they lose their honour embracing the 'shamed life'" (79). Regardless of the mental and emotional toll of being rape victims, emphasis is put on their negative physical transformations, which then becomes the focus of what these women have become. There seems to be an unspoken commentary, or perhaps more of a warning, for women to remain virtuous or risk the consequences of losing said virtue. I believe this to be the case because although one may feel sympathy for both these women because of what they have undergone, they remain monstrous because of their physical conditions, regardless of these inflictions being placed unjustly upon them. This prejudiced way of thinking leads me to believe that the indistinct regard, and the judgmental gaze that is undeniably fixed on these

women is inherently male as, “the mythological figure of Medusa, that primary trope of female sexuality, is a good example of how profoundly the male gaze structures both male and female perceptions of women and of the antidote to the male gaze” (Bowers, 217). As explored by Susan R. Bowers, in her work “Medusa and the Female Gaze,” John Berger makes an interesting point that "men do not simply look; their gaze carries with it the power of action and of possession" (Berger qtd. in Bowers 217). Thus, it is a patriarchal mindset that views these women as monstrous because of the threat that female empowerment has on the patriarchy. Medusa’s sexuality—arguably her female empowerment—is viewed as negative from this patriarchal standpoint, and so when she is raped, the monstrous metamorphic punishment is placed on her, because from this view, she is at fault for being sexual in nature. For Lavinia, she “fulfils the tragic trope of the loyal and innocent woman permanently corrupted by agents beyond her control” (Emmerichs, 98), with her corruption being the focal point of her characterization. Thus, because she has lost her virtue—and in extension her honour—she is also viewed as monstrous because she can no longer fulfill the patriarchal expectation of female perfection as she has been corrupted. Although the audience spends a major portion of the play watching Lavinia struggle to find new ways to communicate with her family and reveal who her rapists are, she remains monstrous—and thus punished—up until the moment of her death when her monstrosity transforms into martyrdom.

Lavinia and Martyrdom

Although Titus, the patriarchal head of his family is the namesake of this play, I believe that the true protagonist and focus of this play’s tragedy is Lavinia. What I find

most notable about Marcus's speech is that Lavinia hesitates to go with him, but why does she choose to return to her father with Marcus? I think it is unlikely that it is because she is forced to, since as I demonstrated previously, Lavinia is not an object of submission. In the case of evading Marcus, she is perfectly capable of running away from him. So why does Lavinia return home? I believe that Lavinia chooses to return to her father so that Titus, the man she admires and trusts most, can be her accomplice—or rather her proxy—in their revenge. In my adaptation, as well as adaptations that I have watched, Lavinia is present at the feast scene, and in some of these adaptations, she attempts to partake in the physicality of the scene. Lavinia's lack of physical ability because of the loss of her hands is an obvious reason why Titus's assistance is necessary, but in my opinion, where the crux of her disability lies is in the verbal necessity of the revenge plot. It is Titus who reveals the full extent of their revenge when he says, "why, there they are, both bakèd in this pie, / Whereof their mother daintily hath fed, / Eating the flesh that she herself hath bred" (TA, 60-62), which is something Lavinia would not have been able to succinctly convey to Tamora. Titus's commanding presence is a necessity in this scene because it is he who reveals to Tamora that she has become the new horrific spectacle—a maternal cannibal—of this scene. This revelation is crucial because finally the spectator's harsh gaze is taken off of Lavinia and instead set on Tamora. This directional change of the male gaze is the moment in which Lavinia transforms from monster to martyr because she is freed from the audience's judgment since Tamora's act of eating her sons, whom she herself brought into this world, is more morally monstrous than Lavinia's disfigurement.

Aside from Titus's role in Lavinia's revenge, she also requires his help in ending her life because she cannot easily do it herself, especially "in the event that something goes wrong during Titus's banquet" (Anderson, 380). Titus's actions offer Lavinia the insurance of not having to suffer any longer at the mercy of anyone else. By killing her, he ensures that Lavinia is freed from any further harm or consequence. Although Lavinia's death is necessary to the plot because it showcases how she was the presence that kept Titus sane and is the catalyst that leads to the many deaths that follow hers, I want to emphasize how cataclysmic and tragic Lavinia's death really is.

As previously mentioned, while researching adaptations of *Titus Andronicus* in order to write my own, I struggled with how detached some of the performances of Titus killing Lavinia felt. While reading the original play and imagining how a parent would react to and treat the body of their dead child, the unshakable image that came to my mind was Mary holding the dead body of Christ. Michelangelo's *Pietà* (1498-1499) located in St. Peter's Basilica, is a sculpture that depicts Mother Mary holding Christ's body after he is taken down from the cross. Mary's face is filled with sorrow and anguish. Although Christ is a full-grown man, she holds his body in her lap like a child, emphasizing that this was the son she raised and loves. When writing my adaptation, although the vocal focus was on Lavinia with the monologue I constructed, I wanted Titus's affection to be demonstrated through the stage directions I wrote for him.

Figure 4: Mary holding Jesus from:
St. Peter's Basilica.
https://core100.columbia.edu/article/pieta-michelangelo-buonarrot

Although Titus is the one metaphorically crucifying Lavinia, I wanted his love for her to be evident in his actions as he listens to her speak, and in how he handles her body. When Titus stabs Lavinia, I have written that he drops the knife that he stabs her with and holds her body in his arms in the same way that Michelangelo depicts Mary holding Christ. Like Mary, Titus raised Lavinia and has great pride in her as her father. As I have argued in the previous chapter, he does not want to kill her, but rather is acting on Lavinia's behalf. Michelangelo's *Pietà* (1498-1499) of Mary holding Christ's body is successful in how it depicts the maternal grief of losing one's child. This being said, this image is also a form of idealism, as it almost aestheticizes Christ's death by depicting Mary in a solemn moment of grief. This image, although sad in nature, is inviting and in a way comforting because it does not capture the horror, incomprehensible pain, and unsightliness of death and loss in its truest form. In opposition to this, Caravaggio's "The Entombment" (1603), although similar to Michelangelo's work, is a piece of art that focuses on realism. This painting captures Christ's body being carried by two of his disciples, as those around him mourn for his loss. In this image, there is profound grief on the faces of everyone surrounding Christ. Mother Mary is older in this image than she is in Michelangelo's sculpture, and the deepest expression of misery is on her face as she looks down at her son. The focal point of this painting is Christ's young, and

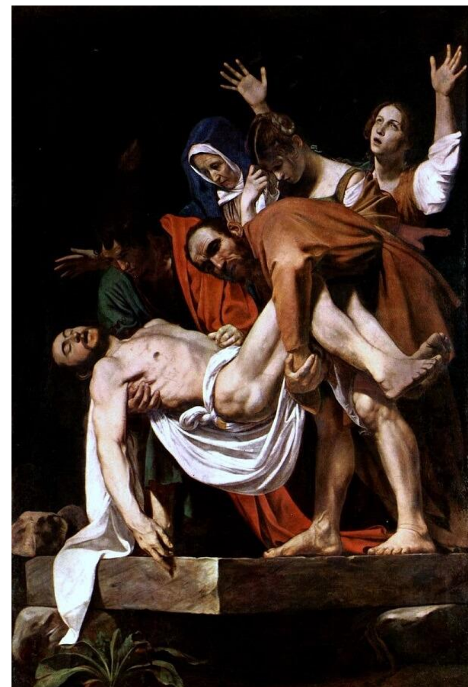

Figure 5: The disciples holding Jesus' body from: Caravaggio. The Entombment (1603) https://www.caravaggio.org/the-entombment.jsp

prematurely broken body. There is nothing aesthetic or inviting about this image, it is grotesque and depressing, but this is what makes it so successful. It captures the true harshness of death. It captures the tragedy of a prematurely broken body.

Lavinia and Cordelia

As I have now emphasized, both Christ and Lavinia are martyrs to their respective situations. In both stories, their broken dead bodies are the centre of the scene and change the trajectory of their individual narratives. Cordelia is a character who also exemplifies this idea of martyrdom and brokenness. Lavinia and Cordelia's characters are synonymous in the sense that they are both daughters who have a complicated relationship with their older, prideful fathers. After hearing her sisters' empty flattery towards their father in order to inherit part of his kingdom, Cordelia finds herself unable to grovel for her father's favour the way that they have. She feels deep love for her father, "I cannot heave / My heart into my mouth" (King Lear, 1.1.93-94), but she cannot find the right words to fully express that love for him out loud. When Lear asks Cordelia, "what can you say to draw / A third more opulent than your sisters'? Speak" (1.1.94-95), she responds, "nothing, my lord" (1.1.96). Unlike her sisters, Cordelia is honest about her feelings towards her father and does not stoop to blandishment in order to secure receiving some of her father's land, rather she tells her father the truth:

> You have begot me, bred me, loved me.
> I return those duties back as are right fit:
> Obey you, love you, and most honor you.
> Why have my sisters husbands if they say
> They love you all? Haply, when I shall wed,
> That lord whose hand must take my plight shall carry
> Half my love with him, half my care and duty.
> Sure I shall never marry like my sisters,

To love my father all. (King Lear, 1.1.106-115)

Although Cordelia openly acknowledges all that Lear has done for her and proclaims her love for him, she states that when she marries, she will also have a duty towards her husband and her affections will have to be split between her spouse and her father. She cannot bring herself to falsely devote herself to Lear the way Regan and Goneril have. Rather than appreciating Cordelia's honesty or coming to understand that if his most affectionate daughter feels this way then his other daughters must be deceiving him, he treats Cordelia with contempt and says, "let it be so. Thy truth, then, be thy dower" (1.1.120) leaving her with no dowry. When the king of France agrees to marry Cordelia, and Cordelia and Lear are about to part ways, Lear proceeds to say, "thou hast her, France. Let her be thine, for we / Have no such daughter, nor shall ever see / That face of hers again. Therefore begone" (1.1.304-306) thus disowning and casting her away.

After being mistreated by his two other daughters and being reduced to nothing more than King in name only, Lear has a realization:

> How ugly didst thou in Cordelia show,
> Which, like an engine, wrenched my frame of nature
> From the fixed place, drew from my heart all love
> And added to the gall! O Lear, Lear, Lear! (1.4.279-283)

After seeing how Goneril and Regan have treated him, he realizes that Cordelia's faults are small in comparison, and he feels deep resentment towards himself for treating her poorly and for banishing her. Despite all the cruel things that Lear said to her, Cordelia's love for her father is present in her actions when she commands the French army to go to England to find and protect Lear. When Lear and Cordelia are reunited, her devotion to him is undeniable as she says:

> O, my dear father, restoration hang

> Thy medicine on my lips, and let this kiss
> Repair those violent harms that my two sisters
> Have in thy reverence made (4.7.31-34)

and kisses her father on the head. Although it is Lear's insecurity and pride that gets the better of him, it is Cordelia who has to suffer because of her father's self-conceit and emotional fragility. At the end of the play, as a result of Lear giving all of his power to his two self-serving daughters, it is Cordelia who lies dead in Lear's arms because she took it upon herself to protect her father when her sisters would not. Cordelia, who returns to England for her father's sake, dies a martyr because of her devotion to her father. Again, the images of Michelangelo's *Pietà* (1498-1499) and Caravaggio's "The Entombment" (1603) come into play as Lear holds the dead body of Cordelia, his precious child, and screams "howl, howl, howl! O, you are men of stones!" (5.3.259), expressing the deepest and most sincere grief for the loss of his beloved daughter.

In the end, Cordelia's choice to not falsely flatter Lear and Lavinia's decision to elope with Bassianus, rather than marry Saturninus, are decisions that lead each respective character to anger their father. In order to determine who inherits his land, Lear asks his daughter to express how deeply they love him—a conversation that would not have occurred if Lear had a son who could inherit his land because it is a patriarchal standard that the first-born son inherits his father's position and assets. Whereas, because Lear only has daughters, he exploits their subservient position as feminine to further feed his pride by bribing them to praise him. It is Lear's decision to banish Cordelia and give all his land to his deceitful daughters because of his hurt pride, and Titus's decision to kill Tamora's son Alarbus, that lead to complex political affairs that result in the untimely and tragic deaths of their daughters. Like Christ in Caravaggio's "The Entombment"

(1603), Lavinia and Cordelia's dead bodies at the end of their respective plays are the bodies of young girls who have prematurely been destroyed.

Regardless of the patriarchal influences that are present in Shakespeare's plays, overall, the tone of his works does not feel like they are from the perspective of the male gaze, rather "Shakespeare makes this influence his subject, interrogating the power of patriarchy instead of guilelessly imitating it" (McEachern, 289). I find this perceptible in the fathers he creates. Take for example, Titus and Lear. Although at the very beginning of their respective plays, they are deemed as influential patriarchal figureheads, by the end of their plays, they are feminized because of their daughters. King Lear loses respect as a king, and at the end of the play before his death, he holds Cordelia's dead body in his arms and weeps because of her loss. The pride that he demonstrates at the beginning of the play is replaced with an almost maternal sorrow as he cradles his dead child in his arms. The same goes for Titus who also maternally cradles the body of his child. Again, for both these fathers, the image of Michelangelo's *Pietà* (1498-1499) in which Mary weeps as she holds Christ's body comes into play. Titus and Lear take on the role of the mother who mourns their child. Their positions are not unlike Gertrude, who wipes Hamlet's brow as a final act of nurturing him before she dies (5.2), or Lady Montague who dies of grief because her son has been banished (5.3). Titus and Lear both learn to be nurturing and feel deep grief for what has happened to their daughters. They are both single parents and have to play the role of both father and mother. It is clear that the matriarchy is missing from these plays, as these fathers do not seem to know what to do with their daughters, yet both Lear and Titus discover love in their feminine positions. This 'reduction' of patriarchal figurehead to maternal caregiver is intentional as

Shakespeare is a very strategic writer, because “like the daughters in his plays, Shakespeare defies the control of the patriarchy, separating and individuating his own identity from that of his literary authority” (289). This being said,

> he does, however, strike an analogous relation to patriarchal influence to which the metaphor permits us access. In the daughters he creates and in the stormy necessity of their removal from the control of their fathers, he forges a critical perspective from which to view patriarchy, a perspective that need not replicate patriarchy's self-characterizations innocently or ideal. (289)

Titus and Lear are never idealized or necessarily characterized as good or righteous, rather their roles and treatment towards their daughters—especially once their daughters demonstrate feminine strength and independence—open opportunities for contemplation and commentary on the patriarchy’s role in the family unit. What Shakespeare gives us through the presentation of his plays is the opportunity to reflect and revise. This is a key reason as to why I believe that adaptation is such an important literary tool, as it provides academics and writers the opportunity to explore what has been done and adapt those concepts with a new modernized mindset. Plays offer us the opportunity to almost intervene in history.

As I have argued, the weight of consequences for literary daughters and sons is very unbalanced because whereas “patriarchy demands, at least of its sons, its replication; its pressures are those of imitation” (289). By comparison, patriarchy demands nothing less than perfection, obedience, and silence from its daughters. At the beginning of the play, Lavinia is characterized as the ideal daughter, but, after her rape and mutilation, she transforms into a literary monster because she is viewed as corrupted by the male gaze

that is fixed on her. She remains this way until someone else goes against the patriarchy's values—a mother who consumes her sons—and only then is she freed from the harsh patriarchal gaze that was fixed upon her. When this gaze is removed, Lavinia transforms once again—into a martyr. She is revered because she dies for her father's sake, to free him from his shame, and this is as an act which redeems her character in the eyes of the patriarchy. It is my hope that through adapting this scene from *Titus Andronicus* and writing a monologue that returns Lavinia's voice to her, rather than leaving her in silence, that I disrupt this idea of Lavinia as a silent and obedient daughter. My hope with this monologue is that Lavinia's words and ownership of the revenge plot emphasize her feminine strength and independence. Through the use of adaptation, I have been able to equal the gendered playing field by emphasizing this idea of the feminized Titus. I have done this by writing stage directions that, when embodied, allow Lavinia the opportunity to have the respect and consideration that I so desperately feel she deserves but did not see in other adaptations of the play. Adaptation truly is an important tool that helps us to acknowledge what has been done while allowing us to consider what we can do to re-write and modernize history to make literary works from the past relevant in a modern-day context.

Chapter Four
The Importance of Adaptation

> "This is not a question of Shakespeare-worship, or the sanctity of the text: it is a question of what the play is about and how it works … Ask not what Shakespeare can do for you; ask what you can do for Shakespeare"
> -John Peter qtd. in Kidnie 35

On June 24, 2022, the Supreme Court of the United States of America overturned Roe v. Wade, the 1973 Supreme Court decision that gave women the constitutional right to abortion, and thus a right to one's own body. This decision will affect millions of women and trans people in the United States, because individual states are now able to ban women, and individuals with a uterus from having abortions. It is estimated that half of the United States will introduce new restrictions or bans ("Roe v Wade" 2022). This overturning will be a death sentence for many women and trans people. There are individuals in the United States whose mothers and grandmothers had more rights to their bodies than they currently do. This is a moment in history in which once again, the female voice, and the right to her body have been suppressed by a patriarchal society.

The inevitable friction surrounding the representation of women in a production taking place within a patriarchal society represents an enduring injustice which falls along gendered lines. Present-day politics in the United States are different by degree but not kind from those expressed in Shakespeare's representation of Ancient Rome. My adaptation picks up on this and highlights that connection by making it more explicit. I started this chapter by quoting John Peter because he argues that "undisciplined or perhaps just thoughtless individualism endangers a greater good" (Kidnie, 36), in this case referring to the survival of canonical drama. Although I am skeptical of his argument, Peter makes an unintentionally compelling point to give adapters something to

consider. As a writer, *what can I do for Shakespeare?* Despite the fact that modern writers, directors, and actors etc. do not owe anything to Shakespeare, literature is able to speak towards modern issues by reflecting on the past. Adaptation allows us to take literature to the next step. For example, by making some changes to the narrative, such as adding modern-day problems into a period piece, adapters can critique the assumptions of that period from a modern perspective. Adaptation can specifically show us the links between a historical period and our own by putting the past into dialogue with the present. Thus, as adapters, what we can do for Shakespeare is use his works to discuss contemporary issues because regardless of being centuries old, they mirror present-day society. This modernization does not erase or corrupt his work, rather it gives Shakespeare's work a second life by allowing a text from the past to speak in the present. In the case of *Titus Andronicus*, what I can do for Shakespeare at this moment in time is modernize his play in order to allow it to better suit this contemporary moment. As a modern reader and adapter, I believe that there is a deficiency in the original text. The lack of feminist consideration leaves the play feeling somehow unsuited to our contemporary moment. By restoring Lavinia's voice, and paying respect to her as a fellow revenger, I have resolved a key issue from my modern political perspective within *Titus Andronicus* because the void that Lavinia's silence created has finally been filled. The men in the play fail to understand Lavinia's martyred signs, but by allowing Lavinia to speak, she clearly expresses what it is that she was trying to convey but could not in her silence.

The female voice is powerful and necessary, but in this play, it is suppressed and overshadowed by patriarchal figures. Although one may argue that it is unfair to think of

a historical work as incomplete because it does not give a conclusion that is satisfying to more modern sensibilities, I am of the opinion that this is the point of adaptation. As an adapter, I am changing the text in order to satisfy *my* vision of it. Adaptation is experimental and allows the writer to explore their creativity by modifying and reimagining characters, the plot, as well as other key aspects of the original text. I am not permanently changing *Titus Andronicus*, rather I am creating room for discussion about women's rights. In addition to this, I believe that the text is unsuitable in this modern day as it does a disservice to its female characters. Tamora, and Lavinia are the only two women in this male-dominated play. Shakespeare himself did not characterize these women as submissive or frail; rather, they are models of independence and fortitude. Their placement in this play is strategic and their voices are necessary in order to balance the heavily patriarchal presence. But by the end of the play Tamora is the only woman who can speak and in order to ensure her survival she is complacent in perpetuating the patriarchy. Tamora is also silenced, because whereas she wishes she could have mercy on Lavinia, she must put aside her womanhood in order to ensure a secure future for herself and her sons. Although *Titus Andronicus* is a play that has strong female characters, their voices are stripped away from them for different reasons and they both end up being controlled by the patriarchal society they live in. I view this as an injustice to both Lavinia and Tamora, and because of this, I have used adaptation to uplift the female voice in *Titus Andronicus* in order to demonstrate their enduring agency despite their circumstances.

Although Shakespeare lived and died centuries ago, his texts continue to resonate with contemporary issues. *Titus Andronicus* matters more than it ever has, because it is a

play about women and their bodies. Especially right now, in the timeline that I am writing in, women's rights and their voices need to be uplifted and heard. We can find aspects of our modern reality mirrored in the play: Lavinia is silenced and denied bodily autonomy by the men around her, and the patriarchal power structures they enforce. Chiron and Demetrius are not her only offenders; Titus, her father, is the one who takes away Lavinia's right to live. Rather than allowing Lavinia to remain a victim of rape, mutilation, and murder, adaptation has allowed me to give her the agency to become a revenger and to choose to die, rather than be murdered. Lavinia is a character who embodies the notion "my body, my choice." I have taken on this project because to me, *Titus Andronicus* felt incomplete and hollow; it needed something to breathe life into it. Adaptation has allowed me to complete the play by giving Lavinia the ability to speak once again, as the female voice is what was missing from this heavily gendered play. By adapting the play, I have not used my own voice to put words in Lavinia's mouth the way the men around her have; instead, I have listened to the voices of other Shakespearean characters, as they have voices that are able to speak for Lavinia. By using Shakespeare's own dialogue, I was able to better suit the play's representation of women's voice and agency to our own contemporary historical and cultural moment. Adaptation has allowed me to intervene in this way, as well as use Lavinia's unfortunate situation as a case study to think about and discuss feminine injustice from the year 1594 in context with modern day issues from the year 2022.

Adaptation is an empowering process that allows the adapter to experiment and make alterations that give the text a new perspective and meaning. In my own adaptation, I wanted to give Lavinia more agency by emphasizing her choice of having Bassianus as

a lover, rather than allowing Lavinia to further be perceived as an object of submission. As an adapter, I have the liberty of making decisions such as this in order to bring to fruition the vision that I have in mind. Although the text does not delve into the relationship between Lavinia and Bassianus—because soon after their marriage he is killed, and she is silenced—it leaves room for interpretation on the nature of their relationship. As I have discussed in chapter two, Saturninus accuses Bassianus of rape, *stuprum*. Thus, an interpretation of their relationship can be that their marriage was forced on her. Yet, as I have argued previously, Lavinia never accuses Bassianus of this, she does however accuse Chiron and Demetrius of raping her. Thus, it can also be interpreted that Bassianus and Lavinia were truly in love. This discourse is left up to the reader's interpretation, as both interpretations of their relationship can be argued because the text seems purposefully ambiguous. As an adapter my interpretation is that Lavinia and Bassianus are in love. Not only is this how I have always interpreted the play, but this view also gives Lavinia more agency, instead of having her autonomy stripped in favour of male power systems. The Lavinia in my adaptation is extremely strong-willed and is not complacent towards the heavily patriarchal presences that surround her, rather she fights to stand beside them as an equal. Adaptation has allowed me to take a stance on the debates in this play, such as the debate of whether Bassianus and Lavinia are in love or not, or if Lavinia wants to live or die. I have chosen to adapt and voice my opinions through an existing character from a famous play because for years, I could not stop thinking about the silenced Lavinia and how unjust her death is. Although I could have put this effort into creating something new, and supporting female empowerment in that way, it would not have settled my feelings for Lavinia and her haunting silence.

Adaptation has allowed me to give a voice and a platform to my opinions in a powerful and unique way. By adapting, I have come to understand Lavinia and Titus in a way that I did not before, because in order to reimagine the play I had to first understand its foundation. My adaptation has settled my discomfort towards *Titus Andronicus* because as someone passionate about Lavinia's situation, I was able to intervene, and give her an opportunity that she otherwise would never have had. By adapting, I have given both Lavinia and the play an opportunity to be consumed and understood in a new way. Adaptation is advantageous, as it allows adapters to experiment and intervene in issues such as racism, sexism, oppression etc. Rather than being a bystander, adaptation allows writers to make a difference. By nature, adaptation can be a disruptive process, but disruption is often an imperative prerequisite to worthy discussions which advance social discourses surrounding identity and ways of being. Without disruption, the status quo is permitted to endure, to engage unchallenged in its silent violence of exclusion. It is because of this that I believe that adaptation is an important literary tool. In this chapter, I will be using Linda Hutcheon's book, *A Theory of Adaptation* and Margaret Jane Kidnie's book, *Shakespeare and the Problem of Adaptation* to define and formulate an understanding of adaptation, its processes, and the concerns associated with it.

Linda Hutcheon offers a few detailed descriptions that together provide a better understanding of what the term adaptation means. Hutcheon begins by describing adaptation as, "an acknowledged transposition of recognizable other work or works, a creative *and* an interpretive act of appropriation/salvaging, an extended intertextual engagement with the adapted work" (8). She goes on to clarify that, "adaptation is a derivation that is not derivative—a work that is second without being secondary. It is its

own palimpsestic thing" (9). At the end of the text, Hutcheon concludes in addition to her earlier definitions that adaptation,

> is not a copy in any mode of reproduction, mechanical or otherwise. It is repetition but without replication, bringing together the comfort of ritual and recognition with the delight of surprise and novelty. *As Adaptation*, it involves both memory and change, persistence and variation. (173)

She also highlights that, "what they are not is necessarily inferior or second rate—or they would not have survived" (177). Hutcheon draws attention to the fact that adaptations are present in all forms of the media that we consume, taking shape "on the television and movie screen, on the musical and dramatic stage, on the Internet, in novels and comic books, in your nearest theme park and video arcade" (2). The ways in which adaptations take form seem to be limitless and constantly adapting to new technological forms. This being said, the art of adaptation complicates matters because,

> If we do not know that what we are experiencing actually *is* an adaptation or if we are not familiar with the particular work that it adapts, we simply experience the adaptation as we would any other work. To experience it *as an adaptation*, however, as we have seen, we need to recognize it as such and to know its adapted text, thus allowing the latter to oscillate in our memories with what we are experiencing. (121)

Adaptations usually openly announce that they are reworkings of another source. If they do not, or if that fact is overlooked, sometimes adaptations get mistaken for original works, as it takes a knowing viewer to acknowledge that what they are consuming is an adaptation. Arguably, it is not as problematic from an adapter's standpoint if a viewer is

not in the know, because as Hutcheon emphasizes, "for an adaptation to be successful in its own right, it must be so for both knowing and unknowing audiences" (121). Adaptation allows people the freedom of creativity, "people pick and choose what they want to transplant to their own soil. Adapters of traveling stories exert power over what they adapt" (150). Adaptation is a useful tool that can be liberating for some. In my own work, it allowed me to reimagine and redefine Lavinia's relationships, as well as her role as a capable member of her household. Although adaptation allows people to creatively explore, and opens the door to infinite possibilities, it may also pose a threat.

Although adaptations are indeed everywhere, the theory of adaptation is a highly debated topic in both academia and the arts. To some like Robert Stam, their validity is put to question because for some, "literature will always have axiomatic superiority over any adaptation of it because of its seniority as an art form" (4). It is because of this overt relationship to another text, and the idea of viewing adaptations "*as adaptations*" (6) that "adaptation studies are so often comparative studies" (6) since the original text will always be a point of reference for the adaptation. As Hutcheon highlights, "we have seen that adaptations disrupt elements like priority and authority (e.g., if we experience the adapted text *after* the adaptation). But they can also destabilize both formal and cultural identity and thereby shift power relations" (174). Although adaptation is a useful tool to engage audiences to think and view something differently, and has become popularized over the years, there is a genuine concern among some that adaptations will transcend their adapted sources. In her book, Kidnie shares a similar mindset with Hutcheon's definition of adaptation and helps to further solidify a theory of adaptation by focusing specifically on how adaptation is a dynamic process that naturally depends on an agreed

upon framework of essential aspects crucial to the constitution of the original "work." At the heart of her argument, Kidnie defends the belief that, "adaptation as an evolving category is closely tied to how the work modifies over time and from one reception space to another " (5). While quoting Charles Spencer, Kidnie argues that "flawed production nonetheless has its merits, ... '[i]t's not like defacing a painting, a permanent act of vandalism. The play will always be there'" (Spencer qtd. in Kidnie 1). This is an interesting observation, as it implies that "the play exists somewhere—or rather, somewhere *else*—apart from its production" (2). I appreciate Spencer's thought-process because it argues in favour of allowing creative liberty. Directors and adapters should be allowed to explore and experiment with the play as not every production will be conceived and performed the same. A production is a moment in time, whereas a text is timeless, thus I strongly agree with Spencer's argument that even the worst adaptation is not a permanent act of vandalism. I do not see why experimenting with adaptation is perceived as a problem. With my own adaptation, as I previously mentioned, I gave Bassianus and Lavinia's relationship more importance than the text implied. Although I centered his role in my adaptation, readers of the play and future adapters may not interpret Bassianus this way. My adaptation is one creative interpretation of a play that can be interpreted many different ways. My choice to give Bassianus importance or give Lavinia a voice does not tarnish *Titus Andronicus*; rather, it offers a different perspective. This being said, many adapters and scholars have argued in favour of adaptation, but the discourse surrounding this theory is ongoing.

Adaptation is a valuable creative tool but its presence in literature proves to be complex and divisive, especially for those who value the canon. Kidnie deduces that,

> addressing adaptation as something like an independent art form opens up areas of investigation not available to more traditional compare-and-contrast methods, these studies tend to assume that there exists a relatively stable distinction between work and adaptation. (4)

Her argument acknowledges Hutcheon's definition of 'adaptation' and emphasizes that "adaptation is 'an *acknowledged* transposition' ... that offers an extended engagement with a work that is described as already 'adapted' and so identified as something creatively distinct from the subject of Hutcheon's analysis" (4). This being said, "this is not to say that adaptations are not also autonomous works that can be interpreted and valued as such" (Hutcheon, 6). Given the fact that adaptations are prevalent and in high demand in the media and in many diverse art forms, they are indeed autonomous, valued, and in my opinion, necessary.

Yet, Hutcheon emphasizes that "fidelity criticism" (6) plays a large role in adaptation studies. By this, Hutcheon refers to the tendency to evaluate adaptations according to their degree of fidelity to the original work. As an adapter, I have become aware of the standard that my adaptation may be held to. With this in mind, however, Hutcheon argues that "an adaptation's double nature does not mean, however, that proximity or fidelity to the adapted text should be the criterion of judgment or the focus of analysis" (6). In other words, Hutcheon argues that a successful adaptation will not necessarily be similar to its source, nor should that be the standard that adaptation is held to. Adaptation by nature does not conform, because "the work is pragmatically determined according to use, it can be modified—or not—to accommodate better the different needs of successive ages and contemporaneous cultures" (31). Adaptations may

completely change the medium, change the narrative, or stylistically differ from what they are being adapted from. This being said, Hutcheon argues that "for an adaptation to be experienced *as an adaptation*, recognition of the story has to be possible: some copying-fidelity is needed, in fact, precisely because of the changes across media and contexts" (167). Specifically, there needs to be similarities between adaptations and the works they are adapted from in order for a work to be recognizable as an adaptation. There has to be "repetition without replication" (149) so that the work is still considered new and separate but fits within the confines of what adaptation is. By nature, adaptation disturbs the notion of fidelity, yet it should not stray too far away from its original source that it is completely unrecognizable. Although adaptations do enable creative freedom, there are still some limitations as to what constitutes whether a project is an adaptation or not.

There are many reasons that lead adapters to the decision to adapt a work. Sometimes, the goal is a change of medium, such as adapting a novel to a movie, or a movie to a play. For some, economically, adaptations are "safe bets with a ready audience" (87). And in my opinion, most notably, adaptations can be used "to engage in a larger social or cultural critique" (94). What Hutcheon finds more interesting than the notion of fidelity,

> is the fact that the morally loaded discourse of fidelity is based on the implied assumption that adapters aim simply to reproduce the adapted text ... there are manifestly many different possible intentions behind the act of adaptation: the urge to consume and erase the memory of the adapted text or to call it into question is as likely as the desire to pay tribute by copying. (7)

Rather than just simply aiming to reproduce the text, Hutcheon argues that adapters "have their own personal reasons for deciding first to do an adaptation and then choosing which adapted work and what medium to do it in. They not only interpret that work but in so doing they also take a position on it" (92). Personally, the motivation for writing my adaptation came from the feminist desire to give Lavinia more agency and empathy. As a big fan of the play *Titus Andronicus*, and of Shakespeare's works in general, my intention was not to undo or to disrupt the plot as Shakespeare envisioned it, although adaptations can and do disrupt their sources. Rather, I wanted to redefine Lavinia's characterization to emphasize her vital presence with themes I felt were already present but overshadowed in the play. Hutcheon draws attention to the handbook for screenwriters that states, "if the adapter is not significantly and measurably moved by the novel, for whatever reason, the play will suffer accordingly" (94). Especially in the political climate that I am writing in, in which Roe v. Wade has been overturned in the United States, the female voice and female empowerment are more important than ever. As Hutcheon argues, "whether an adapted story is told, shown, or interacted with, it always happens in a particular time and space in a society" (144). The time for adaptations on the timely topics of gender inequality and bodily autonomy is now. Hutcheon argues that "adaptation is how stories evolve and mutate to fit new times and different places" (176). By adapting act five, scene three of *Titus Andronicus*, my hope is that Lavinia and her suffering will be given new consideration, downplaying her role as just a theatrical spectacle, and resisting the tendency to forget her. Since I first read the play, my passion for Lavinia has not diminished. Especially in this current political climate, I am further motivated to uplift the female voice and empower women to have agency over their own bodies. As a fellow

adapter I can confidently say that I understand why other adapters feel compelled to write.

Not all adaptations are created with the goal of disrupting an established tradition or narrative, appreciation or homage are often motivation enough to re-examine a famous work. Hutcheon highlights that, "adaptations of Shakespeare, in particular, may be intended as tributes or as a way to supplant canonical cultural authority. As Marjorie Garber has remarked, Shakespeare is for many adapters 'a monument to be toppled'" (93). I find this idea compelling because although I respect *Titus Andronicus*, I felt there was room for improvement. As I have previously discussed, the idea of Shakespeare as a proto-feminist is a gripping perspective because, as Hutcheon remarks,

> Postcolonial dramatists and anti-war television producers have likewise used adaptations to articulate their political positions. This kind of political and historical intentionality is now of great interest in academic circles, despite a half-century of critical dismissal of the relevance of artistic intention. (94)

Thus, Shakespeare can be considered a proto-feminist because his work has opened doors to discuss feminism in a historical context. It is not anomalous that adapters feel compelled to articulate their political positions in texts that leave ambiguous space for interpretation or improvement. As Hutcheon notes when discussing David Henry Hwang's adaptation of *The Flower Drum Song*, he "claimed to return to and thus be 'faithful' to the 'spirit' of Lee's book" (95). I too feel that I am being faithful to Shakespeare's work with Lavinia's monologue. In my adaptation, I have not undone any of what Shakespeare had intended (although I could have). I feel that my adaptation highlights themes that are already present in the play. As I have discussed in chapter two,

when Titus calls himself “Titus, unkind and careless of thine own” (TA, 1.1.89), he acknowledges that he needs to bury his sons because his only sense of caring for them is laying them to rest. I argue that he holds this mindset towards Lavinia as well. Titus believes that honour for Lavinia is death—because death will free her from her shame. Lavinia’s indignity is a reflection of his own. By cleansing her of shame, which he tells himself he is doing because it is noble, the byproduct is that he is also cleansing himself. As I have previously discussed, Titus is a flawed character, but for him, this act of ‘restoring Lavinia’s honour’ feels like his only option because in the patriarchy’s eyes, Lavinia is damaged and thus dishonourable. Titus’s conceptualization of his own pride encompasses that of his family. Although his mindset is archaic, in his own way, he is showing respect to her by trying to restore their collective honour. Thus, Lavinia’s transformation from monster to martyr is synonymous with her transformation from dishonourable to honourable in the patriarchy’s eyes. Seeing this in the original play, as a modern adapter and a feminist, I have chosen to given Lavinia the agency to decide her own fate rather than leave the choice to Titus. I have replaced Lavinia’s silence in the scene with emotion and purpose. As Hutcheon explains, “the act of adaptation always involves both (re-)interpretation and then (re-)creation; this has been called both appropriation and salvaging” (8), and this is what I have done with my own adaptation. What I have ‘salvaged’ through my re-interpretation of the feast scene is the female voice that originally was overpowered by patriarchal influences. In order to free Lavinia from her silence, I re-created a voice for her using other Shakespearean characters' lines—predominantly women’s—in order to balance out the heavily-gendered nature of the play. My intention in reimagining this famous work has not been to disrupt or invalidate it;

rather, because of the appreciation I have for *Titus Andronicus*, I felt the need to inject it with a social conscience so that it might endure, not simply as a great work, but as an important work.

I do not share the view that adaptation is overly problematic. As Hutcheon highlights, "adaptations are obviously not new to our time ... Shakespeare transferred his culture's stories from page to stage and made them available to a whole new audience" (2). Thus, in accordance with how Hutcheon defines adaptation, Shakespeare is also an adapter because he wrote plays that are inspired by, and sometimes based on, other stories. Acknowledging this supports Hutcheon's argument that,

> Stories also evolve by adaptation and are not immutable over time. Sometimes, like biological adaptation, cultural adaptation involves migration to favorable conditions: stories travel to different cultures and different media. In short, stories adapt just as they are adapted. (31)

If Shakespeare's works can be viewed as adaptations, with the story of Philomela from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* being "the central mythic source of the plot of *Titus Andronicus"* (Anderson, 358), then I argue that my editing of act five, scene three of the play is, as Hutcheon says, a move towards a more favourable condition—in this case it is female empowerment. My creation is an adaptation of an adaptation. Although *Titus Andronicus* is a famous play, Ovid's *Metamorphoses* is not forgotten, or overshadowed by Shakespeare's adaptation. In addition to this, Hutcheon theorizes that,

> adaptations are what have been called 'fluid texts' that exist in more than one version; they are the 'material evidence of *shifting* intentions'. As such, they

> suggest the need to adopt a form of historical analysis that can accommodate 'creative process and the forces that drive textual fluidity.'" (95)

This idea of shifting intentions is something that has been prevalent throughout human history. The oral tradition of storytelling eventually became written stories, which became movies, plays, operas, and even pieces of artwork. Each retelling changes because people perceive and remember things differently. That, in itself, is adaptation. Today this process continues, "despite being temporally second, it is both an interpretive and creative act; it is storytelling as both rereading and rerelating" (111). Adaptation has the power to take what has been done, and with careful consideration, modernize historical works to "engage in a larger social or cultural critique" (94), and as Hutcheon acknowledges, it can also be used to avoid those things if needed (94). Adaptation, with its shifting intentions, gives older works new life. In the process of changing themes and aspects of the plot, it creates room for conversations and debates that allow people to contemplate what alterations have been made and why. As Hutcheon says, "adaptation appeals to the 'intellectual and aesthetic pleasure' of understanding the interplay between works ... The adaptation and the adapted work merge in the audience's understanding of their complex interrelations" (117). What makes this process so fascinating, "is that, afterward, we often come to see the prior adapted work very differently as we compare it to the result of the adapter's creative and interpretive act" (121). Thus, rather than taking attention away from their sources, adaptations tend to reignite an interest in the original works. As Hutcheon argues, "an adaptation is not vampiric: it does not draw the life-blood from its source and leave it dying or dead, nor is it paler than the adapted work. It may, on the contrary, keep the prior work alive, giving it an afterlife it would never have

had otherwise" (176). Adaptations do not erase or invalidate their source; rather, by modifying and creating room for conversation, adaptations give their adapted work a chance to be consumed by a new audience.

Textual fidelity proves to be an on-going concern when discussing the validity of adaptation. Kidnie, quoting James McLaverty, reiterates his question, "if the *Mona Lisa* is in the Louvre, where are *Hamlet* and *Lycidas*?" (11). The Mona Lisa is a physical painting. It is tangible, unlike characters, who exist as artistic creations but are not corporeal. But,

> according to Bateson, there is an objective *Hamlet* that just 'is'. And yet since the work of literature as a thing of the mind exists apart from its printed copies and performances, the reader/spectator never has direct access to it: books and theatrical productions in this account function only as what he calls 'storage' containers. The literary original rests in speech—specifically, the 'oral drama of the [author's] mind in its definitive form'. (11)

Although Bateson makes a compelling argument, Kidnie identifies his stance as being idealist, and I agree with her. Kidnie quotes Neil Taylor as she questions, "'[i]s there a fixed entity which we could call Shakespeare's *Hamlet*?' … concluding that since texts continue to 'proliferat[e]' by means of editorial and theatrical interpretation, '[t]he answer has to be no'" (Taylor qtd. in Kidnie 39). Taylor makes an excellent point because there is no 'true Hamlet'. His character is a fictitious entity that varies according to different people's perceptions. In addition to this, "there isn't even—can't be—a definitive text. Our perspective on the play is bound to change from generation to generation" (40). Editorial work complicates the notion of what is deemed 'original'. As

Kidnie highlights, "even an actual copy of the Folio is not self-identical with itself over time" (147), and that is because multiple edited versions of the same work have been published over time to fix errors such as spelling (162). Thus, "to recognize Shakespeare's works in modern editions founded on substantive texts (so excluding some of the early quartos as unreliable, and most publications that post-date the First Folio as derivative or adaptive) is just that—a choice" (161). Thus, the Shakespearean texts that most individuals are consuming are derivative versions of the source texts. These changes not only edit grammar, but also specific uses of language. As these texts update and modernize, they move further away from the original text. This being said, as Kidnie highlights, "a play, for all that it carries the rhetorical and ideological force of an enduring stability, is not an object at all, but rather a dynamic *process* that evolves over time in response to the needs and sensibilities of its users" (2). Thus, if the process of editing is in itself a form of adaptation, is viewing the "work as process" (6) really such a negative conception? In line with Bateson's idealism, the notion of viewing the character as an art form and as something to be cherished is not far from the perspective shared by those who believe in textual fidelity. As Kidnie highlights, "where the integrity of paintings and sculptures is at continual risk from forgers, thieves, and vandals, the integrity of drama is presented as being no less at risk from theatrical adapters who misunderstand, fail to declare, or seek to conceal their true intentions" (23). Thus, it seems that the fear of forgery is a constant concern for those who value the canon. I can understand this anxiety, but as I asserted previously, adaptations usually openly announce their relationship to their adapted source. And if they do not, and the work diverts so far from its original source that it is unrecognizable, then it functions less as an adaptation

than a unique work. One familiar with the cannon will inevitably recognize an adaptation, regardless of the depth of its transformation.

Yet, this fact is not enough to pacify the concerns associated with forgery. Kidnie emphasizes that, “the more canonical the author and dramatic work are, the more anxiety there is that one might inadvertently or carelessly accept false goods in place of the real thing” (23). This was a concern that I had when starting my own adaptation because I was nervous about how my adaptation would be received since I am reworking a classic Shakespearean play. To deal with this anxiety as I pursued my adaptation, as previously mentioned, I tried to be as true to the adapted text as much as possible. Although adaptations can be disruptive in nature, for my particular work, I did not feel like I needed to drastically change the play; rather, I needed to adjust the ending to uplift Lavinia’s voice and agency. This being said, I argue that as an adapter, I do not necessarily need to justify my creative decisions. Aside from having to remain recognizable enough to be understood to be an adaptation, adaptation has no other real limitation. Arguably, my adaptation can be considered tame, as its main focus is to return Lavinia’s voice, and does not drastically change the plot. Although my work differs from the canon, my adaptation will not overshadow, or invalidate *Titus Andronicus*. Again, an adaptation is a single instance of the work, it is not a permanent vandalism; it is temporary and experimental. By keeping this in mind and further developing an understanding of adaptation, I was able to ease my anxieties around this project.

A production of interest when considering Shakespearean adaptation is Matthew Warchus’s staging of *Hamlet* (1997). As Kidnie highlights, there were many complaints that “Warchus has transformed *Hamlet* into American family drama, and classical theatre

into popularist film" (44). There was discourse on this production because, "what one might typically think of as Hamlet is thus not only cut and rearranged, incorporating material from all three extant early texts, but also supplemented with business as diverse as a home movie" (38). It was the cutting and rearranging of lines that led some to feel as though this production was no longer *Hamlet*, because it was too unfamiliar, and "owes an evident debt to story-telling techniques familiar to film" (37), rather than trying to preserve its integrity as a staged production. Kidnie highlights that critics felt that Warchus put too much effort into making his production Hollywood-esque, an act that is perceived as giving into a mainstream idealism to popularize Shakespeare's work in a light that does the work a disservice because it 'dumbs it down' (43). Although I can understand why critics felt this way, I disagree because I believe that Warchus's production was a unique take on a play that has been replicated so many times already. Again, his work did not deface the original *Hamlet*, rather, it was a form of experimentation that allowed Hamlet to be perceived in a new light. According to Kidnie, in defense of his work,

> Warchus told reporters curious about rumours of cuts not to make 'a big issue' out of his treatment of the text, emphasizing … that 'everyone who has ever staged Hamlet has cut it in some way', it was never likely in such a context that the extent and type of shaping he undertook could be made without inviting controversy. (Warchus qtd. in Kidnie 42)

I agree with Warchus. When changing mediums, whether from the page to the stage, or from the stage to the screen, sometimes sacrifices to the text are made in order to accommodate the new medium. Warchus did indeed make major changes and cuts, but it

was for the sake of embodying the vision he had for his adaptation. Yet, as Kidnie highlights, the general feeling after watching his production of *Hamlet* was that "there was too much Warchus and not enough Shakespeare" (42). This production generates a fascinating case study because it probes the question: how much can an adapter rework before the work is no longer recognizable? In the case of Warchus's production, "the show generated a crisis of recognition" (43), thus it seems that adapters have to be careful about how much they are reworking, or risk straying too far away from their source. As Kidnie demonstrates, a production needs to be identifiable as an adaptation in order for it to be connected with the canonical work. Kidnie highlights that,

> the process posited by Goodman whereby great canonical works can be altered by a series of tiny substitutions, omissions, and alterations into easily consumed popular art seems already under way. What is worse, some spectators not only seem willing to accept in place of the real thing what some consider a fake, they even seem to prefer it. (44)

This anxiety surrounding the supplanting of great works with popular—perhaps more accessible—adaptations, articulated here by Kidnie through Goodman, betrays an underlying friction between original works and adapted works. As Kidnie concludes, "authenticity is determined less by textual fidelity than by the extent to which an instance conforms to an insubstantial standard—the work—that seems to exist prior to, and untouched by production" (63-64). Kidnie argues that there is an essence to a canonized work, which can only be defined by outlining failures to conform rather than by outlining a fixed set of properties. In order for an adaptation to be successful, it must not change this essence, but rather emanate it.

Regarding the notion of editing, Kidnie discusses the approach taken by Daniel Fischlin, and Mark Fortier in their work 'General Introduction' to *Adaptations in Shakespeare* (4) to which they comment that, "they decided to use adaptation '[f]or lack of a better term' to describe the phenomenon of 'recontextualization' that characterizes the way writers, directors, and editors accommodate Shakespeare's plays to new audiences" (5). Fischlin and Fortier define adaptation as,

> Adaptation as a material, performance practice can involve both radical rewritings, and a range of directorial and theatrical practices … One of the other ways in which Shakespeare is made fit is through criticism, itself a form of adaptive undertaking by virtue of its intertextual dependence on a source text. A related area that concerns adaptive practice has to do with how editorial practices that seek to stabilize or destabilize texts literally adapt Shakespeare, making him conform to a particular editorial vision. (Fischlin and Fortier qtd. in Kidnie 5)

This is a position that Kidnie finds inclusive and distinct. Fischlin and Fortier also address how one knows when they are faced with adaptation stating, "that *any* modern or historical production of Shakespeare, whether theatrical, critical, or editorial, is an adaptation, part of an ongoing process of making Shakespeare 'fit'" (5). Hutcheon makes the same point when she theorizes that, "every live staging of a printed play could theoretically be considered an adaptation in its performance; it is up to the director and actors to actualize the text and to interpret and then recreate it, thereby in a sense adapting it for the stage" (39). When first reading Hutcheon's work, I thought that this argument was reasonable because I am of the belief that plays are recipes for performance in the sense that the actors and directors, through embodiment and creative

liberties, give life to the lines and stage directions. Like following a cooking recipe, no two dishes—or in this case performances—regardless of following the same instructions, will be exactly the same. Kidnie's work gave me a different perspective because, "by finding adaptation everywhere, Fischlin and Fortier are in danger of emptying the term of meaning, making it simply synonymous with production" (5). Although this is problematic, the viewpoint that performance and the text are tangled is difficult to dismiss, as Kidnie demonstrates when she discusses David McCandless's view that:

> all productions are necessarily adaptations in the sense that they adapt to the stage a specific interpretation of the text—always a distortion—rather than the text itself'. It is impossible, of course, for 'the text itself' to appear on a stage because it exists as literature. The prior unspoken assumption that leads to an understanding of theatrical productions as 'necessarily adaptations' is the identification of the work of art with one idealized text, rather than with its (many) texts and performances. (22)

Fidelity criticism proves to complicate adaptation's validity as 'second-rate' because as McCandless argues, any reproduction of the text is viewed as 'adaptation' rather than as simply a production of the text. Performing 'the text itself' on stage is impossible due to the change in medium, or time constraints, and thus a need to adapt to fit within certain boundaries.

Textual fidelity is held on an unrealistic pedestal by those who seek to safeguard the canon. This is troublesome because, "collapsing adaptation into production neglects a crucial feature of the phenomenon—precisely the widespread critical ability to discriminate between Shakespeare and Shakespearean adaptation" (5), as Kidnie has

argued that only some Shakespearean productions are 'not quite' Shakespeare (5). Production and adaptation are two separate things. Plays are written to be embodied, so it is only natural that there will be differences in production because different people will embody characters in different ways. Not every production is an adaptation, as adaptations, in their experimental nature, tend to divert from the text by doing more intense appropriating/salvaging than a production following the script would. Kidnie defends the notion that, "adaptation is ... only an extreme version of the reworking that takes place in any theatrical production … Theatre is always a form of reworking, in a sense the first step toward adaptation" (6). If this is the case, the "decision to transform 'old or otherwise alien scripts to new purposes and circumstances [is] hardly in itself a critical problem so long as the intention of adaptation is generally made clear as such'" (22). In other words, "if members of an ensemble have chosen to adapt the text rather than to perform it authentically, simple integrity demands that they characterize their production accurately as an adaptation" (22). In order to avert misinterpreting a work of adaptation as canon, and thus, part of the issue associated with fidelity criticism, one must make it clear that their project is an interpretation of another source. This being said, even while being open about adaptation there is the issue of what should and should not be adapted. Kidnie, quoting Stephen Poliakoff, shares that, "to twist Shakespeare into becoming a 'new play' … The plays can be done in many new ways but we shouldn't be making them into 'new work': we should have faith in new audiences changing the context of his plays by themselves" (45). In addition to this, Poliakoff finds that, "the greatest challenge to the perpetuation in performance of authentic Shakespeare is a loss of 'faith', a late-millennial exhaustion or vaguely defined postmodern cynicism that

prompts a restless, shallow search for novelty" (45). I think this is an outdated mindset because if as Kidnie suggests, we should view "work as process" (6), and if the reader's perspective will "change from generation to generation" (40), adapting a play to create 'a new play' should not be problematic, especially if "the play exists somewhere—or rather, somewhere *else*—apart from its production" (2). Rather than discarding a canonical work as being outdated or immoral, I view its reworking as educational and thought-provoking because it gives both the writer and consumers the opportunity to think and reflect on the changes that have been made, as well as a chance to consider why those changes are necessary. Viewing the "work as process" (6) allows the work to transcend time and stay relevant, rather than get left behind as the world modernizes.

In line with the discussion on modernization, Kidnie highlights forms of interventionist production that "might seem readily cordoned off from the work as straightforward adaptation … to enable the adaptation to stake out an independent place from which to return the work's look" (67). As Kidnie emphasizes, these interventionist productions, "often speaking from, and to some extent for, disadvantaged identity positions, seek to confront and resist an oppressive canon through strategic intervention" (67). My work is in line with this model, as I have isolated Lavinia and made her the focus of intervention within my adaptation. As Kidnie states,

> borrowing from Helen Tiffin the term 'canonical counter-discourse': 'Rewriting the characters, the narrative, the context, and/or the genre of the canonical script provides another means of interrogating the cultural legacy of imperialism … Counter-discourse seeks to deconstruct significations of authority and power exercised in the canonical text, to release its strangle-hold on representation and,

> by implication, to intervene in social conditioning.' Making Shakespeare seem merely contemporary to a modern audience is not enough; 'updating' is entirely secondary to, and might even distract from, the project of reworking the drama to 'decentre imperial hegemonies'. (67)

Canonical counter-discourse allows the writer to intercede by first identifying what is problematic or what needs to be commented on within the work, and then permits the writer to revise the identified problem/situation through specific interventions. In my own adaptation, counter-discourse has enabled me to rewrite a section of the narrative in order to empower Lavinia, and thus changes the context of the end of the play. Kidnie emphasizes Peter Widdowson's thoughts that,

> 'a clear cultural-political thrust' is perhaps the most important defining feature of the genre. Canonical works are 'revised and re-visioned as part of the process of restoring a voice, a history and an identity to those hitherto exploited, marginalized and silenced by dominant interests and ideologies'. (Widdowson qtd. in Kidnie 67)

By following this schema, I was able to restore Lavinia's voice, and thus her identity by freeing her from the patriarchal influences that both silenced and marginalized her. In doing so, I have restored justice to her character. As empowering as this process has felt, Kidnie citing Martin Orkin cautions,

> not to 'bypass the Shakespeare text' altogether in favour of the 'appropriations, rewritings or even cannibalizations … [that] have provided a much-favoured field of enquiry in writings on "post-colonial" Shakespeare, particularly in North America'. His concern, writing specifically from a South African perspective, is

> that the immense critical labour expended on adaptation leaves unexplored the usefulness in the classroom of the 'text itself' in terms of providing one possible set of 'historical perspectives and frames for our own contemporaneity. (Orkin qtd. in Kidnie 68)

I share Martin Orkin's opinion that the canonical text is important and that it should not be brushed aside in favour of appropriated rewritings altogether. Although I felt compelled to rework Shakespeare's text, I believe that there is great value in the original *Titus Andronicus.* Although it is fictional, it captures a historical mindset on the treatment of women and on the patriarchal influences in Shakespeare's lifetime. There is a commonly held belief that in engaging in adaptation one is, in essence, writing back to the original author. As Kidnie argues, "writing back to Shakespeare is always writing *with* Shakespeare" (87). Thus, adaptation is a form of collaboration between author and adapter. As Kidnie states,

> Shakespeare's works seem to speak for a former age (or else, notoriously, for the reactionary values of a present one) to the extent that they can be sealed off from a current moment of revisionist production concerned to adapt the works-as-past in terms of its own priorities. This is thus a politics that works itself out in terms of a binary of 'then and/vs. now'. (68)

My adaptation is my interpretation of what I felt was unjust and outdated while reading the play. The 'text itself' has spoken and will continue to speak to people in different ways; especially as political and moral values change over time. It is because of this that I believe that adaptation is a form of temporary experimentation. By adapting, I have explored my feelings and opinions, living in a twenty-first century Canada. The next

adapters of *Titus Andronicus* will rework things differently based on their feelings and what they perceive within the text, but also based on the political and cultural environments they live in. Thus, it is crucial to preserve canonical texts, as they speak differently to varied cultures and generations. But this preservation needn't exclude the possibility for adaptation.

To this end, Linda Hutcheon and Margaret Jane Kidnie's theories on adaptation were useful in further shaping my understanding, as well as appreciation for adaptations. Regardless of being temporally second to their adapted work, as Hutcheon says, they are not secondary, rather, "it is its own palimpsestic thing" (9). As both authors demonstrated, defining adaptation is not a straightforward process because theoretically speaking, any recreation of any sort can technically be considered an adaptation. Although this complicates things by definition, it solidifies the fact that there is no true "original work" as manuscripts are constantly being re-edited, and revised. Thus, because the text has no true independent existence, it is more accurate to perceive "work as process" (6). This being the case, adaptation is the natural next step in this process. As time goes on, and political and social mindsets change, there is a need to modernize works so that they can exist within a present-day context. Whether it is adapting a novel or play to the screen, or editing a work to open room for conversation, the only way for literature from the past to stay relevant in a modern society is to allow the text to adapt with the times. Adaptation will not erase or overthrow the original work if the adaptation is seen *as an adaptation*. Rather, it acts as a form of revival because it puts the work in the spotlight once again and gives it an opportunity to be consumed, an opportunity that it would otherwise not have had. Rather than works being left behind in history and

dismissed as being "problematic," adaptation allows a conversation to start to identify and overcome these issues. In that sense, it is imperative that canonical texts are preserved because they will educate future generations on the past and allow said generations to conceptualize the narrative based on their own future cultural and political values. In this sense, adaptation is a creative tool that allows writers to experiment in a collaborative process between author and adapter to reimagine the past without truly harming or disrupting it. As an adapter, what I have done for Shakespeare is allow his text *Titus Andronicus* to give voice and a platform to issues surrounding the policing of women's bodies, and the suppression of the female voice by patriarchal structures. By restoring Lavinia's voice, not only am I uplifting the female voice, but I have also given *Titus Andronicus*, a play that was published in 1594, new meaning that makes it relevant in the twenty-first century. By adapting, I was able to intervene in this play in order to create space for crucial conversation surrounding the timely topic of gender inequality. Literature is an invaluable asset. Although some writing is fictitious, as readers our world is presented to us in a way that is familiar, yet just different enough to imagine divergent possibilities. Although these possibilities may be outside of our current reality, the similarities allow opportunities for critical thinking that affect how we think and function in actuality. Life imitates art. Adaptation is indispensable, as it is a process that allows us to challenge the past and move towards a more inclusive future.

Conclusion

I started this thesis by quoting Claire McEachern because she effectively summarizes the role of women in Shakespeare's works:

> To identify the place of women in Shakespeare is frequently to describe the controlling artistic and patriarchal forms. Women are celebrated (if domesticated) in comedy; marginalized (if excused) in history; empowered (if destroyed) in tragedy—and are a subversive presence in each mode. (287)

The women in Shakespeare's works tend to find themselves in unfavourable positions by the end of their respective plays. This characterization is, however, strategic in that though oftentimes they seem to lack agency, they are successful in undermining the authoritarian power of the patriarchy at play in their works. In Lavinia's case, she is empowered when she is destroyed because her death acts as the catalyst that transforms her from monster to martyr. In *Titus Andronicus*, death frees Lavinia from her shame—a patriarchal concept which serves to control the behaviour of women—which is a freedom that she would not have been guaranteed if she continued living. As a modern reader and adapter, my impression when reading this play is that there is a distinct lack of feminist consideration because of the time and place in which it was conceived. This is not to say that Shakespeare's patriarchal characterizations are a reflection of himself or his values, but rather some of his works—*Titus Andronicus* in particular—showcase the mindset of historical patriarchal systems that were in place. In this play specifically, Shakespeare addresses the hegemonic masculinity in Ancient Rome. As Bethany Packard outlines in her work, "Lavinia fights aggressively to force the Andronici to read the story of Philomela, struggling to write the crime that not long ago was for her unutterable" (292).

In act four, scene one, Lavinia gives Ovid's *Metamorphoses* to Lucius's son in an attempt to reveal to her family that she was raped. In doing so, "she risks reminding them that she ought not be alive" (292). In the world of the play, rape is a symbol of dishonour to one's family and an offence that is punishable by death on the part of the victim. As Saturninus asserts, "the girl should not survive her shame" (TA, 5.3.41). By revealing the full extent of her afflictions, Lavinia gambles with her fate, yet her actions are purposeful. Before Lavinia's assault, she is unable to say the word "rape." Instead, she refers to it as "their worse than killing lust" (2.3.175). Yet, after her assault, Lavinia has a change of heart as she demonstrates when she writes "Stuprum. Chiron. Demetrius" (4.1.78) openly revealing that she was raped, as well as the names of her rapists. Throughout the play, Lavinia demonstrates her position as subversive. She constantly fights against her own physical limitations, as well as the patriarchal influences around her in order to be a fellow revenger and stand as an equal beside her male family members. Yet, at the end of the play, Titus seemingly disregards Lavinia's position as a collaborator and takes ownership over her agency by ending her life in what appears as a public execution. As a modern reader and feminist, Lavinia's treatment comes across as extremely cruel and unjust. By adapting the play with a conscious feminist ideology, my adaptation truly empowers Lavinia because I have returned her voice and agency. Although Lavinia still dies at the end of my adaptation, there is a conscious agency associated with her death. Her demise is no longer a massacre; rather it is political because Lavinia acknowledges her fate and plays a part in it.

Throughout this work, I have argued in support of returning Lavinia's voice and agency to her because her male family members fail to interpret her martyred signs. In a

male-dominated society and household, there is a limitation to their understanding of Lavinia's emotions and body. There is a need for her voice because only she can express what has happened to her as well as what she needs. Although Titus earnestly attempts to be her translator, his understanding—which is hampered by a patriarchal upbringing—cannot be a substitute for the female voice. With this in mind, I have reimagined act five, scene three of *Titus Andronicus* with more feminist consideration. In order to return Lavinia's voice to her, I have prioritized writing a monologue that expresses Lavinia's feelings of pain, anger, and sorrow. I narrowed these concepts down to four concrete ideas. The first is her feelings about the assault and her reactions to what people have said and assumed about her. The next is her expression of anger towards Tamora for allowing her sons to mutilate and rape her, especially because Tamora, as a fellow woman, ought to know the profound implications of rape. This section allows Lavinia to vocalize her position as a revenger alongside Titus. Then, Lavinia moves on to talk about her grief for Bassianus's loss. Lavinia's romantic relationship is something that I reimagined for my adaptation. Their marriage is powerful, as it demonstrates Lavinia's agency to choose love rather than having yet another man impose his ideals on her. Their romantic relationship makes his loss all the more devastating for Lavinia because he is killed and she is raped on top of his body. I wanted to give Lavinia the chance to mourn the life she could have had with a man who respects her. Finally, to conclude the monologue, and to further highlight Lavinia's agency, the final section is her choice to die and her farewell to Titus. Lavinia accepts death, not because it is imposed on her, but rather, because it is a choice that will free her from her own suffering. In my adaptation, Lavinia asks Titus to kill her, and he complies with her wishes. This monologue not only restores Lavinia's

voice and allows her to freely express what she could not when she was silenced, but it also gives Lavinia the agency to decide her own fate rather than be destroyed by patriarchal standards. When considering how to restore Lavinia's voice, I decided not to use my own voice to speak for her because I did not want to put words in Lavinia's mouth the way the men around her do. Rather, I chose to listen to the voices of other Shakespearean characters whose situations align with Lavinia's. Rather than speaking for her, I found that using Shakespeare's own dialogue was the most effective way to restore her voice. By adapting this scene, I have uplifted the female voice and showcased Lavinia's humanity instead of allowing her to be overshadowed by her male family members or to remain as a theatrical spectacle.

When reading and watching adaptations of *Titus Andronicus,* I found it difficult to accept that Lavinia is not treated like a fellow revenger alongside Titus. Reiterating Willis's point, revenge is perceived as "a purely 'male' problem" (22) whereas "women are the nonviolent sex, far more likely to be victims of violence" (22). While this thinking might have been common in Shakespeare's time—as the history of England remains a history of patriarchy and any exceptions to this rule remain exceptions—I wanted to think beyond such binaries by giving Lavinia more purposeful stage directions and lines. Lavinia has proved that she is a fighter—not the object of submission that she is frequently mistaken for being—and deserves to enact her revenge alongside Titus as an equal. Yet, in my research, it became clear that the patriarchal script is difficult to escape. There is a fixed patriarchal gaze that is placed on Lavinia because of the horrific nature of her deformities. To reiterate, "men do not simply look; their gaze carries with it the power of action and of possession" (Berger qtd. in Bowers 217). This male gaze

categorizes Lavinia as ‘othered’ because her inability to speak and sign traditionally, as well as the gory result of her assault goes against the idea of ‘the norm.’ The male gaze is not limited to gender, rather this gaze affects both male and female perceptions of women (Bowers, 217), as everyone, regardless of their gender, is complacent in perpetuating the patriarchy. Throughout *Titus Andronicus*, Lavinia undergoes a series of transformations. She first transforms from the idealized woman to a monster after she is assaulted. Her second metamorphosis occurs when Titus kills her, and Lavinia transforms from monster to martyr. Lavinia’s metamorphoses are of course metaphoric, but nonetheless this innate fluidity is still imposed on her by patriarchal standards and formulates her identity throughout the play. Though patriarchal superstructures weigh heavily on all individuals, the pressures exerted upon daughters by this system, through their families, carries a degree of severity and often fatality unparalleled by that which is laid on the shoulders of sons. Both Cordelia and Lavinia exemplify this as they both have complicated relationships with their prideful fathers. At the end of their respective plays, both Lavinia and Cordelia die because of that pride and lay dead in their fathers’ arms. Although both women drive their respective plots, Lavinia and Cordelia are not permitted to continue living as their deaths are the price of their fathers’ humanization to the audience. Despite the degree of their characterization, even in death, they are rendered one part of a transaction. In Western literature, male voices are frequently the unmarked standard. Adaptation has the ability to reconsider this pattern of language in order to present marginalized voices—like women’s voices—in the center of the narrative.

By reclaiming and repurposing Shakespeare’s own dialogue, I have returned Lavinia’s voice to her. To do this, I specifically draw on the theory of adaptation to

reimagine act five, scene three of *Titus Andronicus*. Adaptation is an invaluable creative tool that allows writers to experiment and reimagine literary works without truly harming or disrupting them. Linda Hutcheon defines this process as "an acknowledged transposition of recognizable other work or works, a creative *and* an interpretive act of appropriation/salvaging, an extended intertextual engagement with the adapted work" (8). Although adaptation is a derivation from another source, it is not derivative (9) as there must be "repetition without replication" (149). There are many reasons that lead adapters to the choice of adaptation such as a better chance of recognition and financial security, a change of medium, or a political aim. For my own adaptation, I chose to adapt for political reasons. Lavinia's forced silence and loss of bodily autonomy seemed hauntingly similar to my own political climate. The overturning of Roe v. Wade, and the need to uplift and empower the female voice solidified my own convictions regarding the pursuit of feminist consideration, as this is a play about women and their bodies. As Marjorie Garber asserts, "it is one of the fascinating effects of Shakespeare's plays that they have almost always seemed to coincide with the times in which they are read, published, produced, and discussed" (xxiii). Adaptation uses literature to graft the issues of the present onto the past in a manner which builds upon an established social critique or reflection. For example, by injecting modern political and social sensibilities into both a great work and the established dialogue surrounding it, adaptation provides an opportunity to place the past into dialogue with the present. Adaptation does not corrupt or invalidate its adapted source; rather, through modification and the creation of room for conversation, adaptations give their adapted work a chance to be consumed by a fresh audience. Although adaptations can be disruptive in nature, this disruption is important

because it often leads to worthy discussions that may advance social discourses surrounding identity and ways of being. Without disruption, how can one be expected to challenge enduring systems of oppression? Adaptation is a powerful asset in this respect. By adapting *Titus Andronicus,* I was able to intervene by creating space to discuss the timely contemporary issue of gender inequality. I undertook this project because I had something to say about how women have been treated historically in literature and how that treatment remains relevant to our own historical moment. There are many divergent ways to explore intervening in Shakespeare's works specifically that would allow individuals to critique assumptions from Shakespeare's time from a modern perspective. For example, in *Twelfth Night*, what if Viola realized that identifying as a man felt closer to her true identity? Or, if in *The Tempest*, Caliban was a specific type of racialized man? These adaptations would critique and make room for conversations on topics such as queerness and race. The possibilities of adaptation are endless.

My hope is that my adaptation and this thesis have made a case for Lavinia and her right to speak and have agency, as well as for being open-minded about adaptation as a literary tool. By undertaking this project, I have started a conversation and have created a foundation to view Lavinia as more than just a silenced victim and object of revenge for Titus. By uplifting her voice, I have freed Lavinia from her silence and enabled her to stand beside Titus as a fellow revenger, breaking the binary that women are the submissive and nonviolent gender. My adaptation has created a space in which it is impossible for Lavinia to be forgotten, as her powerful words in act five, scene three have revealed her to be a complex individual. Shakespeare has given voice to many characters, some being villains, monsters, and rogues, yet he chose to take Lavnia's voice away. By

theorizing and practicing adaptation, I have demonstrated how adaptation can be used to give power back to marginalized voices, and in doing so, I have made *Titus Andronicus* more suited to this contemporary moment by empowering Lavinia and uplifting the female voice.

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