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Analysis of classical sources in *Titus Andronicus*

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this dissertation is to identify and analyse the classical sources that influenced the Shakespeare's tragedy *Titus Andronicus*. In order to reach this aim, the study of the influence of Greco-Latin tradition will be developed with the purpose of reach a better understanding of the process of imitation and adaptation that the dramatist carried out. Finally, there is a comparison of the differences and similarities between *Titus Andronicus* and the two main classical sources that inspired it: Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and Seneca's *Thyestes*.

The conclusion reached is that *Titus Andronicus*' plot is based on the topics treated in two classics that Shakespeare adapted at his own time, as well as the audience of this play does because these themes are still present in our society.

Keywords: Titus Andronicus, Shakespeare, classical sources, violence, Renaissance, drama.

RESUMEN

El propósito de esta tesis es identificar y analizar las fuentes clásicas que influenciaron la tragedia de Shakespeare *Tito Andrónico*. Para alcanzar este objetivo, se desarrolla un estudio de la influencia de la tradición greco-latina con el propósito de alcanzar un mejor entendimiento del proceso de imitación y adaptación que el dramaturgo llevó a cabo. Finalmente, hay una comparación de las diferencias y semejanzas entre *Tito Andrónico* y las dos principales fuentes clásicas que lo inspiraron: *Metamorfosis* de Ovidio y *Tiestes* de Séneca.

La conclusión alcanzada es que el argumento de *Tito Andrónico* está basado en temas tratados en dos obras clásicas que Shakespeare adaptó a su tiempo, de la misma manera que la audiencia de esta obra puesto que estos asuntos están todavía presentes en nuestra sociedad.

Palabras clave: Tito Andrónico, Shakespeare, fuentes clásicas, violencia, Renacimiento, drama.

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Introduction

The purpose of this work is to conduct an analysis of the classical sources that William Shakespeare used to create his tragedy *Titus Andronicus*. Moreover, I want to explain not only the Greco- Latin works which inspired the dramatist and their presence in Titus Andronicus' plot, but also the way Shakespeare adapted them to the context of his time. The final aim of this analysis is to point out the connection between the ancient culture, the Shakespeare's period and our time through the topics used in *Titus Andronicus*, which are based on classical works and which are still present in the current society.

In order to reach this purpose, I consider necessary to start with a introduction about the role that classical sources played in the Renaissance Literature in general terms. Firstly I will talk about the apparition of the concept of Renaissance and the use of it among time. I will also name the main characteristics of this new movement, paying special attention to the one that concerns my work: The interest for Greek and Latin culture. Later, I will comment the process how Renaissance spread from Italy to England, and how thanks to the political stability of the country the seed could grow until its highest point. Later I will explain how this new movement was motivated by grammar schools which provided the opportunity to read and study ancient Rome and Greece's great works. In the next part, I will focus on the influence of Classical sources in English Literature which supposed the bloom of epic poetry and drama. Focussing on the last of these genres, I am going to explain the political purpose for the Queen's major support to Renaissance theatre and its great development. Then, I will classify the plays into three different groups according to the patters used by the author, concentrating in the ones who used the classical literature as a model. Closing the circle a bit more, the last part of this first chapter will treat about the relationship between Shakespeare and the Greco-Latin culture. I will start with a brief comment of the author's classical education and knowledge of Latin, following with the use of these sources in his work which goes from the reference to mythology to the imitation of the plots of several ancient works. By the end of the chapter I am going to analyse the characteristics of the Shakespearean plays which are set in the ancient Rome because they are a good example of how the author adapted the classical culture to his own time.

After understand the use of classical sources in Renaissance English drama and in Shakespeare in general terms, it is time to address the topic of my work which is *Titus Andronicus* in the last chapter of my work. To begin with this second part focused on the Shakespeare's tragedy, I will enumerate and comment some of the main questions that surround the play since its publication. The first one is the controversy about if Shakespeare is the one and only author of *Titus Andronicus* and I will provide the reasons behind this doubt among with the most common answers to this question. I will follow with a contextualization of the play in Shakespeare career and its popularity among History. Starting from the moment when it was published, going through the different periods of time until its revival nowadays. Moreover I will comment the reasons behind the audience's reject or acceptance. I cannot move into the analysis of the classical sources present in the play without summarizing the plot, and once the characters and events of *Titus Andronicus* are introduced I can start with the analysis.

The next two sections of this work are dedicated to the study and adaptation of the two main classical sources that Shakespeare imitates. The first one is the *Metamorphoses* by Ovid and the second one is *Thyestes* by Seneca. I will follow the same pattern of analysis for both of them but dedicating a separated section for each one. I will start summarizing their plots in order to make easier the following comparison of these classical works and the Shakespearean tragedy. The analysis will be based on the similarities of both works but I will also point out the differences in order to reach a more complete comparison. Furthermore I am going to comments these common points and variations following the different phases present in both works, which coincide with the chronological order in which the events happen in *Titus Andronicus*.

Finally and in order to finish my work I will do a last section dedicated to comment the role of women and black men in *Titus Andronicus* as a classical heritage. I will analyse in depth the evolution of two characters among the play and how violence affected them. As the last reflexion before the conclusions, I am going to opine about the role of violence in the play, as well as its symbolism and personification.

Chapter 1: The importance of Classical Sources in Shakespeare's plays.

In this first chapter I will discuss briefly the apparition of term Renaissance and some important aspects of the movement in order to reach a better understanding of the classical sources that Shakespeare used in 'Titus Andronicus'. Starting with the Renaissance in general terms, I will follow on what this new movement supposed for the English literature of the Golden Ages, until I reach the literary genre we are interested in: The Drama. Finally, in the last part of this first chapter I will analyze the influence of the ancient literature in Shakespeare's works.

1.1 Classical sources in the Renaissance:

The idea of Renaissance was introduced by the Swiss historian Jacob Burckhardt in his book *Die Kultur der Renaissance in Italien. Ein Versuch*. According to Burckhardt, its origin took place in Italy in the late 14th century and he considered the Renaissance as the first step for the freedom that characterizes the modern world. Burckhardt based his definition on Michelet's description of the Renaissance as 'The discovery of the world and the discovery of man', and after collecting a lot of quotations about this topic he englobe them under six main characteristics: the State as a work of art, development of Individualism, the discovery of the world and people, society and festivals, morality and religion, and the revival of Antiquity (11). The last characteristic is the one which concerns this work so it will be the one that I will develop among these pages. However the term was not a modern invention or Burkhardt's, as it was already used by men in the Renaissance period to describe the return of the interest for Greek and Latin culture with the purpose "to get closer to the classical spirit and to relive and rethink the past in terms of the present and vice versa" (Reynolds and Wilson, 110).

The Renaissance thinking spread from Italy in the 16th and 17th centuries across Europe taking almost a century to penetrate into the English scene. Its beginning is commonly situated in 1485 after the end of the War of the Roses and the start of Tudor dynasty. This period of peace and political stability created a perfect atmosphere for the progressive development of the movement in English culture. However, it was a slow

expansion of the ideas and style so it was in the second half of the 16th century in the Elizabethan era when it reached the highest point especially in the fields of literature and Music. It also brought back several disciplines used in ancient Rome and Greece which were rescued and applied by the Renaissance followers in all the fields of knowledge. I would like to emphasize the importance of rhetoric which then was considered as a major discipline every educated person should acquire in order to complete not only his intellectual development but also for the proper functioning of the new society. The renaissance artist used the ancient tradition of rhetoric as a medium of expression and its popularity can be seen in remarkable works such as Shakespeare who used rhetorical figures in every two or three lines in his plays (Charney, 247-249).

The Renaissance was considered as an educational phenomena due to it starting a revolution in teaching which began in the new grammar schools but not in universities as they were complex systems which were reticent to innovations (Taylor, 253-257). There the students could feel free to read, compare and analyze any literature genre, Which is the reason why James Hankins said that “critical reading” emerged in the 15th century when the humanities became more professional. Grammar schools contributed to the growth of interest for the classical culture and thanks to the references to it in the new created works, Greco-Roman literature became more popular in the educated circles. As Erasmus claimed, “every scholar should read the whole of ancient literature twice, once for the content and once for the style, taking notes as he went” (Quoted in Vickers, 82), which was carried out by all the Renaissance writers. Therefore, Latin kept a privileged position in the field of education due to every student having to learn how to read and write in it, even though the Renaissance supposed a grown and development of all the vernacular languages, including English.

1.2 Classical sources in English Drama

Focusing on the literature, the Renaissance writers found in the classical texts a large source of resources which could be edited and adapted to their own works and context. In this sense, the rebirth of Latin culture and heritage caused a development of the classical inheritance which at the same time stimulated a further growth of a new

literature genre. The Greco-Latin influence not only concerned the plot but also metaphors, phrases, rhetorical figures and similes which provoked the need and creation of new specific dictionaries explaining those references. It also supposed a bloom of different genres in English literature, mainly for epic poetry and drama which were represented by acclaimed writers such as Spenser, Jonson, Marlowe and Shakespeare. Both of these genres grew under Elizabeth reign when the use of English language in literature was stimulated partly thanks to the printing of plays and poems which went into circulation and so their popularity elevated between the different social classes. It was thanks to this large royal support that the new genres grew and developed, due to the Queen's use of the Renaissance poems and plays with a propagandist purpose. In the same way that in the ancient texts the heroes and Gods of Rome and Greece were exalted by narrating their achievements and acts of bravery, the Renaissance writers portrayed the stories of legendary Kings and great knights of the Middle Ages with the aim to eulogise the virtues of England in the past and to create an identity of pride in the audience. Moreover, the Queen wanted to break with the Catholic past of England and assure the new protestant religion through this new movement, and with this purpose the classics were translated and adapted to those ideological perspectives (Brooke, 233-234). Talking about the influence of classics on English literature, on the one hand there were scholars who claimed that these contemporary authors had a lack of originality, accusing them of being trivial translators who copied the sentences and speeches of classical works. On the other hand, some later experts like Kraemer (485-488) strongly affirmed that it does not imply that the Greco-Latin authors were superior to the Renaissance ones or that English literature lacked originality. The Renaissance writers read and studied the classical works in order to have a model for technique and a source of inspiration for the plot. It is important to point out that the Greek tradition was still an unknown field for the fifteenth century scholars due to a huge amount of works that were missing or remained untranslated, which meant that the Latin tradition and authors were the most popular models of imitation.

Getting in with the new drama creation, when the first echoes of the Renaissance movement and thus the awakening of the interest for the ancient literature started to spread in England, the plays were represented not in the vernacular language but in

Latin which kept the drama as a genre that only a limited amount of scholars could enjoy. It was the Queen herself who demanded the creation of new plays in English, which according to Brooke (234-236) was the first step on the creation of the professional English drama and it also opened the door for the later great dramatists such as Shakespeare or Marlowe. There were both private for nobility in the court and public performances for the lower classes in the theatres

In order to analyse the patterns followed by the Renaissance playwrights in their works, Eugene M. Waith (309) classified them into three main types: Patterns inspired by traditions of staging, by the dramatists' perspectives and by the classics. The first group concerns the English dramatic tradition which is characterized for the abiding interest in the actual representation of the play on stage and the spectacle, in other words, the play is written and composed keeping in mind the moment when it will be performed in a theatre. Although Waith pointed out the difficulty to define the second type, it can be distinguished because of the continuous concern for a larger perspective in order to clinch the main plot. Finally, the last type in the classification is the one that I emphasise and explore further in this chapter. The patterns derived from the classics developed around the Latin term *Controversia*, that can be defined as 'an inherently dramatic form of classical declamation and a required exercise for Elizabethan schoolboys which demanded imaginative descriptions and dramatic characterization combined with sensational themes and exciting detail' (Cary, 381).

1.3 Shakespearean theatre and the use of classical sources:

The first question which emerges about William Shakespeare and his relation to the Greco-Latin tradition is what was the author's actual knowledge about not only the classics but also the two ancient languages. This was a question of matter for generations of Shakespearean scholars because Ben Jonson's statement suggested that Shakespeare knew 'small Latine and lesse Greeke' (1623). Most believed that the dramatist had a large classical education which he used in his works. The first argument to defend Shakespeare's knowledge is the fact that in the grammar schools of the time there was provision of a wide and great education of the classics, and even though there

is not a clear answer about how much schooling Shakespeare had, it is assumed that he was an illustrated man. The other argument in favour of Shakespeare's classical knowledge is that many of his works are set in ancient times in Greece and Rome and even those that are not remain full of allusions to mythology, literature, philosophy or history which suggest that the classic tradition influenced his works. However, the fact that in several of his plays some of the literary quotations of the well-known classic authors and references to classical mythology heroes and gods are incorrect or changed spread doubts about Shakespeare's true knowledge and whether he actually knew enough Latin to obtain the information from his reading of the classic works in their original language. There was therefore some thought that by the contrary, he obtained his references from translations of the works in the Elizabethan time. Nevertheless, some sources that he used on his works were not yet translated such as Seneca's *Hercules Furens* and Ovid's *Fasti* (Baumbach, 78) which were the main authors who influenced Shakespearean drama and *Titus Andronicus* which I will analyse later in the second chapter. There are therefore two possible answers: on the one hand Shakespeare must have been able to read and understand enough Latin. In contrast and as suggested by Baumbach (78-79) it was possible that as his audience and the people he was surrounded by were able to understand these classic references without reading the ancient works, he was also exposed to the echoes of classical literature presented in the English Renaissance environment. Moreover, it has been estimated that Shakespeare produced at least two plays per year which meant that he wrote more than a million words in twenty years, so consequently even if he was able to read and translate all the Greco-Latin literature which inspired his plays, the dramatist would likely not have had the time to do it.

As I mentioned above, some of Shakespeare's plays were actually set in ancient Rome and so their characters, but were the Shakespearean plays a good portrait of the ancient Roman world? Well, as it happens to all the questions related to the great author, there are some voices such as Nahum Tate claiming that the manners, circumstances, ceremonies, traditions and status of the characters are all Roman (Quoted in Baumbach, 79). Still other scholars defend that although all the elements he used are of Roman inheritance, the essence of the play itself is contemporary to Shakespeare's England.

There are also a large number of anachronisms in his plays that go from domestic objects such as clocks or nightcaps, to political and religious charges like chief bishops. As Myron Taylor said 'Shakespeare's Romans are Elizabethans in toga' (301), so in conclusion he used the classical sources carefully but adapting them to the spirit of his own age.

Another question which has been asked by many scholars is if the Shakespearean Roman plays should be considered as tragedies or historical plays. Baumbach (85) suggests his plays should be considered to cover both tragedy and History. She affirms that in all of them there are historical moments being recreated, but they are only used as a background for the characters' setting. These characters usually are real personalities who had a great importance in the development of concrete episodes of the Greco-Latin History, still Shakespeare did not choose them because of that reason. He chose them as the protagonists of his plays because of the tragic quality of them and the situations they were involved in.

In addition, several Shakespeare's plays have something in common between them whether they are related directly with ancient Rome by the plot, characters or location or not , all of them have a common source which is the classical world. They also all share the author's interest in *character* which can be seen as the main characteristic that Plutarch ,who was one of the main inspirations for Shakespearean drama in general, emphasized in his works. The Greek writer wrote the next verses at the beginning of *The Life of Alexander* in a way to express his intentions and methods which were later followed by Shakespeare: 'My interest is not to write histories, but only lives. For the noblest deeds do not always show men's virtues and vices; but oftentimes a light occasion, a word, or some sport, makes men's natural dispositions and manners appear more plain than the famous battles won wherein are slain ten thousand men, or the great armies or cities won by siege and assault'(Quoted in Baumbach, 82). Plutarch's large influence is seen in plays like *Julius Caesar*, *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Coriolanus* where there are parts of the characters speeches which follow the same pattern of Plutarch's.

Chapter 2: Classical Sources in *Titus Andronicus*.

In this second chapter I will introduce *Titus Andronicus* and the main classical works that Shakespeare based on for this play. However, I will start this chapter by discussing some important questions that surround *Titus Andronicus* since it was published. The first one is the controversy about if Shakespeare was the one and only author behind the creation of the play. I will follow by commenting the acceptance and rejection that it had along the different ages and its popularity over the time. Conclusively, I will do a summary of the plot with the purpose of having a clear understanding of the characters and events of the play. Later, in the second and third parts I will get in depth with the classical sources used in *Titus Andronicus* by comparing the Shakespearean play with *Metamorphoses* by Ovid and *Thyestes* by Seneca. I will point out the main differences and points in common between the classics and the dramatist's play. Finally, I will analyse the figure of some characters and the symbolism that surrounds them through the use of violence as a classical legacy.

2.1 Contextualization of *Titus Andronicus*:

Starting with the play itself, there are two essential editions of *Titus Andronicus* which have survived to the passing of the time. The first one is a quarto found in a post-office clerk's private library in Switzerland, which was printed in 1594 under the title of *A Noble Roman Historie of Titus Andronicus*. The other one was part of the famous First Folio published in 1623, seven years after Shakespeare's death by their fellow actors Heminge and Condell. However, it is known that at least ninety lines were absent in both of these editions. In 1936 Joseph Quincy Adams published a new edition in which an introduction is established where the story of *Titus Andronicus* cannot be considered as part of Roman History but as a kind of medieval tale with Oriental origin, as all Shakespeare's plays which were set in ancient Rome as I mentioned in the first chapter.

In fact, it is due to the endless violence of the plot that many scholars have claimed that *Titus Andronicus* was not written by the great dramatist. This controversy still remains nowadays with many voices who defend both opinions but there are three main

explanations for this phenomenon. The first one is that this is an experimental and immature play of the master's handwork and he improved his technique in his later tragedies. There is also the possibility that it may be another author's play and by misunderstanding it was attributed to Shakespeare. Finally, the last one is a mix of these two, which means that the first act was written by another dramatist and that Shakespeare continued the play not being as skilled as he was in his most famous works. The majority of the experts claim that in the first act can be recognized George Peele's hand due to it shares style and verbal parallels with other poems of this English author, as J. M Robertson defends in his work *Did Shakespeare write Titus Andronicus?* (Quoted in Wilson, 14). At the same time, it can be appreciated that the vocabulary, images and thoughts are proper of the Stratford dramatist among the other acts and it shares similarities not only in the form but also in the plot with the Shakespeare's long poem *The rape of Lucrece* (Martin Rodriguez, 53-58).

This last theory could explain why there are many contradictions in the plot. For instance, it seems illogic that Titus, who killed one of his own sons in act I, suffers so deeply for the death of his two sons, Martius and Quintius, and wants to take revenge of Tamora. Another plot twist which does not make sense is that in act IV when Titus' son Lucius is exiled from Rome, he is supported by Goth army against Tamora who was their queen at the beginning of the play. Moreover, there are some characters who were in a leading role in the first act and they moved to a second plane or did not even appear in the rest of the play. This is the case of the emperor Saturninus and his brother Bassianus who in the first two acts seem to be relevant characters, but they do not have many apparitions or contributions to the development of the story. The best example is Tamora because in the beginning she is one of the main characters of the play, and in fact she is presented as the enemy of Titus, the antagonist. Despite of that, after the end of the act II she does not appear until the last scene of the IV act and although she is indirectly responsible of the rape of Lavinia and the downfall of Titus' family, she did not carry out those terrible acts of violence. However this also happens the other way around and some characters such as Aaron who were presented in the beginning as an irrelevant role, became the one who planned all those actions against the Andronicus family among the last acts (Wilson, 19-25).

In conclusion, according to Wilson (19-25) there is no evidence of Shakespeare's hand in the whole act I while there are convincing traces of his mastery in the next ones. Furthermore, even his earliest tragedies such as *The two gentlemen of Verona* are richer in form and content, and in opposition to *Titus Andronicus'* characters, the other Shakespeare's ones are full of freshness and variety. In other words, the characters of this play are flat and all speak with the same voice due to their speeches follow similar patterns and even use sentences and vocabulary which have been said previously by other character. So taking into account all these evidences, a huge amount of experts claim that Shakespeare did not invent Titus's story but he revised it and rewrote the last four acts.

JQ Adams classified the play as a "Tragedy of Blood", which along with Kyd's "*Spanish Tragedy*" follow the early Elizabethan taste for ruthless (Quoted in Wilson, 7-9). These tragedies recall to the classical Seneca's tragedies due to the succession of the morbid and macabre acts, and the violent events which end up with a torrent of blood. However, the Shakespeare's tragedy breaks with the classical 'decorum' by showing on the stage all those acts of butchery and assault. Although the multiple classical allusions and references which appear during the whole play and denote the author's desire to catch the attention of a polite and well-educated audience, this play will go down in History for its ruthless and explicit violent scenes (Wilson, 11)

Due to the macabre essence of this play, it experimented different stages of popularity depending on the drama preferences and taste of the audience of each period. When it was published in the early Elizabethan period it has a good reception in the theatre, but that previous taste for crude melodramas grew into a higher skill to create tragedies which were more complex in plot and less morbid in the retaliation. So there were a downfall in its popularity during the Elizabethan golden ages for the English theatre when the audience started to acclaim the new Shakespeare's tragedies and *Titus Andronicus'* popularity dropped. This first period of popularity goes from 1594 with the first record of a production of the play to 1620. During the Jacobean period it kept the level of popularity that it had in Elizabethan period almost intact and it was represented in the British theatres for fifty years after the restoration, but according to John Downes

it was performed but less frequently than other Shakespearean plays (Quoted in Meltz, 156). However, it was born a feeling of nausea and reject for this Shakespeare's tragedy with the beginning of Victorian days because it was considered as rudimentary. This meant that the story of *Titus Andronicus* practically disappeared from the stages from 1725 and on, and for almost three centuries it was only read by a few number of students and scholars. Showing the darkest and more violence side of the human nature was unpopular and rejected by the audience until the beginning of the 21th century when thanks to a popular wave of new cinema directors (such as Tarantino), writers and other content creators that there was a return of the taste for these 'Tragedies of blood'. Meltz points out that "there have been more productions and more performances of *Titus Andronicus* since 1923 than during any comparable period in the play's earlier stage history" (154). Apart from the many adaptations for theatres during the 20th and 21th centuries, I would like to mention that Julie Taymor brought the Shakespearean play to the big screen in 2000 under the title of *Titus*. She kept most of the scenes and characters' dialogues as in the original play, but the story is settled in a decadent Rome with a touch of futurist dystopia. In my opinion, the surrealist environment of the film follows the taste of the audience of this century which makes Titus's story more attractive and closer to the modern style of films. Moreover, I think that the main reason for that is to emphasise that violence, rape, murder and racism are issues which were not only present in the past but also nowadays.

As I said above, I will do a brief summary of *Titus Andronicus*' plot and it is based on my reading of the version of William Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* is from the Cambridge library collection, edited by John Dover Wilson. The first act begins with the general Titus Andronicus' return to Rome after the victory against the Goths. He comes with his surviving sons -Mucius, Lucius, Quintus and Martius- and the Queen of Goths Tamora along with her three sons -Alarbus, Demetrius and Chiron- and her moor servant and lover, Aaron. Despite of Tamora's lament and plea, when they arrive at Rome Titus sacrifices Alarbus to avenge his sons who died during the war and with this first act of violence, Tamora swears to get revenge over Titus' family. After the old Emperor's death his two sons Bassianus and Saturninus being fighting over the throne and thanks to Titus' support Saturninus becomes the new emperor. Then Saturninus ask

for Titus' daughter Lavinia's hand in marriage although she was already engaged to his brother Bassianus, and when Titus accepts his request, Bassianus kidnaps Lavinia. Titus feeling offended kills his own son Mucius for helping Bassianus and Lavinia to get married against his father's commands, while Saturninus marries Tamora who advises him to pretend to forgive his brother and Andronicus family's offences in order to get a later revenge.

During a hunt, Demetrius and Chiron with the help of Aaron kill Bassianus and assault Lavinia in the woods. After raping her, they disobey Tamora's command of killing her, but instead they cut her tongue and hands, so she cannot denounce their crime. At the same time Aaron has a plan to blame Titus' sons, Quintus and Martius, for Bassianus' murder and Saturninus sentences them to death. Later, Aaron fools Titus telling him that if he cuts his hand off and send it to the emperor, he will forgive them. However, Titus receives nothing but his sons' heads and his own hand. After the attack to Lavinia, the death of his sons and Lucius' exile, the Andronicus family's dishonour shows up and it is also the beginning of Titus madness and desire of revenge.

Lavinia with the help of her uncle Marcus finds a way to tell her family about the crime and the name of her rapists. Meanwhile Tamora has a baby who is black as his father Aaron who runs away with him to save the baby from the fury of the Emperor. On his run, he is caught by Lucius who is leading the Goth army against Saturninus' tyranny in Rome. Tamora, Chiron and Demetrius dress up as the spirits of Revenge, Rape and Murder respectively and thinking that Titus has lost his mind, they convince him to organize a feast to set peace between Saturninus and Lucius' army which was at the gates of the city. Titus discovers Tamora's trick but he does not say anything, so Chiron and Demetrius stay fearless in his house. Once Tamora is gone, with the help of Lavinia he kills the boys and prepares with them a meal for the next day feast to make Tamora and Saturninus eat it. At the feast, Titus kills his own daughter in front of the royal marriage who horrified ask him the reason to do it. Here is the moment when Titus confesses about Lavinia's rape by Chiron and Demetrius and what he had done to punish them. Suddenly Titus kills Tamora, Saturninus kills Titus and finally Lucius kills Saturninus and becomes the new Emperor of Rome.

2.2 The influence of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* upon *Titus Andronicus*:

Metamorphoses by the Roman poet Ovid is a collection of 15 books containing more than 250 ancient myths. The most influential for this play and thus the one which concerns this study is the Myth of Philomena which is narrated in the sixth book. In order to have a better vision of the shared parameters which the Shakespearean play and the Ovid's one share, I will make a brief summary of the myth which will help us to see the evidences of Shakespeare's emulation.

So the sixth book of *Metamorphoses* tells the story of the Thracian Tereus who helped the King of Athens Pandion and in return for his alliance he gave him his daughter Procne in marriage. The marriage was surrounded by bad augury which announces the reader the tragic outcome. After having a son with him, Procne convinced her husband Tereus to bring her sister Philomela from Athens, but during their travel Tereus fell in love with her. He decided to rape her and in order to keep secret his horrible acts, he cut Philomela's tongue off and abandoned her in a farm. A year later, Procne who thought that her sister was dead, receives a tapestry which Philomela wove. The Athens' princess got revenge by killing her own son Itys and serving him as a meal to her husband in a feast. Tereus discovered the trick after he ate his only son, and blind by the anger he tried to kill the two sisters. Fearing Tereus' revenge, the women prayed to the gods for salvation and they answered by turning Procne, Philomela and Tereus into a swallow, nightingale and hoopoe respectively. The version that I will use to compare it to *Titus Andronicus* will be A.D. Melville and E.J Kenney's translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.

Starting with the similarities, Shakespeare used this horrifying episode of *Metamorphosis* as the central point of violence in his play. Although there are two murders in act I, it is the rape of Lavinia that triggers the wave of violence and revenge. These two stories share three main phases or stages: rape, glotonomy and a feast which involves anthropophagy.

Bate (115) extended these three main phases and established at least eleven points that *Titus Andronicus* shares with Ovid's book as follows:

1. An initial marriage with bad omen
2. A rape in the woods
3. Glostonomy
4. Revelation of the crime through a text
5. After the revelation of the crime, the characters suffer a great shock which cannot be expressed with words.
6. From tears to desire of revenge
7. Confusion of *Fas* (fair) and *Nefas* (unfair) as self-justification
8. Collaboration of the mutilated victim in the revenge
9. The murder of the antagonist's progeny
10. The avenger kills their own child
11. Antropofagy

In order to analyse the common points of *Titus Andronicus* and *Metamorphoses*, I will follow Bate's stages due to they appear in chronological order in both works. So applying these stages to Shakespeare's play, there are two marriages which predict the horrible fate: Lavinia and Bassianus, and the emperor Saturninus and Tamora. Following with the next stage, there is a rape in the woods and Shakespeare presents Lavinia as a modern Philomela who after being raped not only lost her tongue - Glostonomy- but also her hands. Oakley-Brown (331) points out that with this horrible act, the assaults were taking more than a part of their bodies away, but they also snatched the language from these women and so, their capacity of communication. Shakespeare decided to add more suffering and cruelty to the rape and mutilation, so as Lavinia's uncle, Marcus, said:

Fair Philomela, why she but lost her tongue,
 And in a tedious sampler sewed her mind;
 But, lovely niece, that mean is cut from thee.
 A craftier Tereus, cousin, hast thou met,
 And he hath cut those pretty fingers off
 That could have better sewed than Philomel. (III.IV.38-43)

This indicates that the characters know of the awful Ovid's poem and it can be said that the rapists even learn from Philomela's action to reveal the crime and they assure that the poor handless Lavinia cannot reveal their identities. This is not the only time that a character related these two women: when Aaron is planning the rape with Demetrius and Chiron, he identifies her with the Athenian princess and the two boys with Tereus. Moreover, he points out that they must carry out the rape in a remote place in the forest, hidden by the shadows as Tereus did, so nobody will discover their crime. After the amputation, Demetrius and Chiron abandoned the wounded Lavinia placing branches in the stumps as a way of humiliation, and it is her uncle who find her. They decided to leave her alive, despite Tamora's command, as they thought that being tongue less and handless she could never reveal their crime. In fact, it is just as in Ovid's poem the way Lavinia tells her family what she suffered and reveals the crime through the text. She enters the scene running after her nephew the young Lucius who is holding a illustrated edition of *Metamorphoses*. At that point Titus realises that the location of both rapes seem alike and he compares once again the destiny of the two women. Then, following her uncle's example, Lavinia writes the names of her rapists in the ground holding a pole between her stumps and with the end of it in her mouth. It seems that the two women find a way to express themselves without using words but being cleverer than their assailants. In this moment the Andronicus family discovers the fateful crime and they suffer the great shock Bate mentioned as the fifth stage that the two works share. Here is the beginning of Titus' madness which was already fed by the death of their two sons accused of the murder of Lavinia's husband, Bassianus. Titus starts planning how to get revenge on Tamora and their sons, moving on to Bate's next stage: the revenge. Once he has caught Demetrius and Chiron, his speech reminds them that if they treated his daughter worse than Tereus treated Philomela, he would apply a worse punishment than Procne did.

This is the feast that I have bid her to,
And this the banquet she shall surfeit on;
For worse than Philomel you used my daughter,
And worse than Procne I will be revenged: (V.II.192-195)

However, Titus did not go as far as Procne did as he is not the father of the sacrificed and he did not participate in the feast. He also compares this feast with the legendary battle between centaurs and Lapiths which is narrated in the twelfth book of *Metamorphoses*, as a kind of premonition of the bloody end of that feast. Here is the seventh stage which is how the characters justified the horrible acts they were going to perform, alleging that they must take revenge of their enemies whether it is fair (*Fas*) or unfair (*Nefas*) in God's eyes.

Then, according to Bate's stages, the victim collaborate actively in the revenge. So Lavinia participated in the sacrifice of her assaulters by holding a recipient between her stumps to collect the blood while her father cuts Demetrius and Chiron's throats. Once Tamora and Saturninus are in the feast, Titus kills her own daughter completing the tenth stage. After witnessing the cruel murder, the royal marriage asks Titus why, and he tells them about the rape of Lavinia and those who were responsible for it. Saturninus along with Tamora were the only ones who ate the meal which is the last of Bate's stages: Antropofagy. The royal marriage commands Demetrius and Chiron's presence in order to confront their crime. The following verses reminds to Tereus' request for Itys' appearance and Procne's confession about the actual location of their son. Finally, Titus reveals his crime through the next verses:

Why, there they are, both bakèd in that pie,
Whereof their mother daintily hath fed,
Eating the flesh that she herself hath bred.
'Tis true, 'tis true – witness my knife's sharp point. (V.III. 60-64)

Immediately after saying this, he stabs Tamora without falling forward the characteristic Ovid's dramatization. In this way, the reader will never know if her reaction will look like Tereus who got angry and tried to kill the two sisters. Then, Saturninus kills Titus, and Lucius who could not stand watching his father dying, kills Saturninus in return. So in conclusion, all the characters who were directly or indirectly guilty of a crime die and they are being punished for their offences.

Despite the similarities between these two works which have been analysed above, there are also several changes in the development of the action which not only changes the symbology of the myth but also denotes other external sources. According to Maxwell (70-79) there are five main variations in Titus Andronicus' feast. Firstly there is not only one sacrificed person but two, Demetrius and Chiron, and in Shakespeare's play they were not an innocent child but the rapists and mutilators of Lavinia. Secondly, the person who sacrifices is not the father of the sacrificed, at the contrary Titus is the father of the victim. The next two differences relate the feast itself, which in the case of Titus Andronicus is more thorough than in Ovid's and it is public, not only limited to the avenger and the one who offended him. Finally, after the feast Titus does not present the head of the sacrificed to prove what the offenders have been eating. There is only a verbal confession, as opposed to Philomela's apparition with Itys' head.

According to Waith (40) Ovid's influence is more palpable in the Shakespearean play rather than Seneca's. He tried to identify some of Ovid's elements used by the dramatist in *Titus Andronicus* and remarked the strange *pathos* to tell the story, the persistence on highly emotional effects and the grandiose sense of metamorphosis as an apparently sudden and unmotivated change for the characters. Waith said that "Ovid was more interested in the transforming power of intense states of emotion than in pointing a moral" (44) which can be noticed in the apparent ethical confusion of the play, and which can be seen in Shakespeare's emblematic and elegant approach in his own play.

2.3 The influence of Seneca's *Thyestes* upon *Titus Andronicus*:

The second classic source that Shakespeare emulated in *Titus Andronicus* is the Senecan play *Thyestes*. Due to Seneca is considered one of the masters of classic tragedies, it seems normal that the majority of the English dramatists of Elizabethan age used his plays as a direct or indirect referent. Seneca was the most influential author for the new English drama, due to his tragedies were the most acclaimed not only in the Renaissance time but also in his own age. The Latin author used ancient Greek drama as a source of imitation, in the same way as the Renaissance authors did with his works.

Seneca was also a politician which can be seen in his plays where the nature of governance, kingship and tyranny are presented. Possibly the fact that his plays were seen as stories which could be related with the politics and power issues of the audience's time, is one of the reason why Senecan plays were so popular not only in ancient Rome and Elizabethan time but also nowadays. His plots explore the liberties and responsibilities of monarchy and *Thyestes* is a great example of this due to the story revolves around the disputes over the throne of Mycenae which I will narrate later. In order to compare *Titus Andronicus* with this Latin play, I read Jasper Heywood's Translation of *Thyestes* and this is the version I will use for my analysis.

The play is based on the ancient myth of Thyestes, which was previously recuperated by Euripides. Seneca's work narrates the story of the rivalry between twin brothers, Thyestes and Atreus, who were fighting over the throne of Mycenae. It starts with the apparition of a fury, Megaera, who rose the brothers' grandfather, Tantalus, from the Hades in order to tell him the crimes which will surround Tantalus' family, including madness, adultery, incest and anthropophagy. So the crimes of this family started when Thyestes and Atreus killed their half brother, and their father, Pelops, cursed them . However, after the death of the King, the two brothers fought for the throne and Atreus rose as the new governor. Years later, Atreus is thinking of taking revenge of his exiled brother Thyestes because he seduced his wife Aerope, which would put the paternity of his sons in doubt, and he stole the gold-fleeced ram, which was a symbol of power and right to the throne. So he sent his own sons, Menelaus and Agamemnon, to find their uncle in the exile and convince him to return to Mycenae. When Thyestes came back to the palace, there was a feast as a way of reconciliation between the twins. However at the end of it, Atreus showed him the head of his sons and when Thyestes asked for the bodies to bury them, the King revealed to him that he killed the children and cooked them into a soup. Finally, Thyestes realised that he ate his own children and felt devastated by his brother's horrible crime.

In the case of this particular Senecan play, it was very influential during the Renaissance and established the structural model for revenge tragedies which according to Miola (23) consist of three phases: Apparition of a ghost or fury, conversion process

of the victim into a merciless avenger, and the ritual of revenge which is usually materialized in an anthropophagical feast.

At this point, it seems obvious that the major influence of this Senecan play on Shakespeare's is the anthropophagical feast, where the father eats his own sons without knowing. In fact, it is in the differences with the Ovid's *Metamorphoses* where the *Thyestes* influences can be noticed. Firstly, in both plays the one who killed and cooked the two sacrificed boys is not the father of them. However, although Titus did not have any bloodline with Demetrius and Chiron, in the classic play Atreus is the uncle of the innocent children. Thus, they also share that the only ones who ate the meal were the progenitors of the scarified. Moreover, the reason why Tamora and Thyestes accepted their enemies' invitation to a feast is that they took it as a peace offering from Titus and Atreus, respectively. There are not only references of *Thyestes* story in the ruthless feast, but also in other parts of Shakespeare's play which I will analyse below.

Cunliffe (70-71) claimed that the hidden place in the woods where Bassianus was murdered and Lavinia raped, refers to the stage where the sacrifice of Thyestes' sons took place. Moreover there is also a parallelism between the verse that Tamora says when her sons found her in the woods with Bassianus and Lavinia (II.III.91-104) and how the wood is described in *Thyestes* (650-655). Secondly, the appearance of Tamora disguised as *Revenge*, a fury raised from hell , could be influenced by the advent of the fury of Megaera and Tantalus' ghost at the beginning of the Senecan play. Connected with the idea of Tamora as *Revenge*, it is also possible that Shakespeare decided to show her accompanied by *Murder and Rapine* following another Senecan scene when Thyestes appeared at the palace with his two sons. In other words, There are two aspects that these appearances share:

A) Both Tamora and Thyestes accept the invitation of their enemies and leave their two children in their hands, believing in the kindness of their hosts. In fact, Tamora did not trust voluntarily the lives of her sons, but it was Titus' condition in order to fulfil the empress' wishes. Unfortunately, Thyestes' sons fate is the same as Demetrius and Chiron's: they both were sacrificed.

B) There are parallels verses in both plays where the aspect of the character is explained and described as strange and melancholic. However, in the case of 'Thyestes' it is Atreus who said that about his brother coming back from the exile, while in 'Titus Andronicus' Tamora explains her own odd appearance.

Finally, there is also what some experts identify as a parody of the Senecan choir in Shakespeare's play. In act IV, Titus and Marcus started to shoot arrows to the Gods on Mount Olympus which causes a cataclysm in the signs of the zodiac. This refers to the change that the signs suffered due to Atreus' crime at the end of the Senecan play. This process of periodical destruction of the universe was known as *metacosmesis* by the Stoics. Thus, many mythological creatures and figures appear in this *Thyestes* fragment, including the mythical centaurs Chiron which could inspire the name of the youngest of Tamora's son.

Talking about the Senecan influences for the creation of characters, many experts have noted that there is a reflection of the Senecan Atrius, not only in Titus but also in Tamora's loyal servant, Aaron. This can be seen in the final act when Aaron is going to be executed and he claims that the only thing he regrets is he had not committed worse crimes. Atrius felt these same dissatisfaction and he considered that killing his brother's sons and offering them as a meal to him was not enough punishment for Thyestes. So thought the dissociation of Atreus personality, Shakespeare clarified his two facets: firstly the victim who became avenger, and then the sinful avenger with no mercy or regret. In the case of Tamora, she can be identified with the fury as she is the reason why the violent wave started, which in some way shows Titus's revenge as a fair consequence of the horrible crimes committed by the antagonists.

So as we have seen, *Thyestes* is the main influence of the classic author for this tragedy, but it is not the only Senecan play which inspired the English author. Miola (40) pointed out that there is resemblance between Tamora's useless plea for her son's life at the beginning of the play and the Trojan women's ones in *Troades*. In fact, the whole first act refers to this Senecan play as it includes a defeated nation and the sacrifice of it

progeny in order to appease the souls of the ones who lost their lives in the recent war. Furthermore, Tamora is not the only character identified with the mothers of the dead Trojan youths, Titus's farewell words for his sons dead in the war against the Goths (I.I.150-156) are a parallelism of *Troades'* lament.

Another Senecan play which is present in topic is *Phaedra*. The female character, Phaedra, can be personalized in Lavinia due to both women suffering a rape, but also in Tamora because they stayed unburied as a punishment for their crimes at the end of both plays. In fact, two characters of this tragedy used Senecan cites from the classic work:

Demetrius: Sit fas aut nefas, till I find the stream
To cool this heat, a charm to calm these fits,
Per Styga, per manes vehor. (II.I.133-135)

Here, Demetrius is using these Senecan verses in order to express the desire he feels for Lavinia and to justify the rape he is planning with his brother. Many experts noticed that there is a variation of the original verses, which can be explained by saying that Shakespeare wrote 'wrong' the Latin words on purpose due to in *Phaedra* the verses were a declaration of love and Demetrius' intentions with Lavinia were closer to evilness. The other fragment which was also altered by the dramatist was used by Titus when Lavinia's suffering and rapist were revealed:

Magni Dominator poli,
Tam lentus audis scelera? tam lentus vides? (IV.I.81-812)

By using those verses, Shakespeare is connecting the suffering of Theseus when he finds out about the rape of Phaedra, with Titus' reaction to a very close situation. It is important to clarify that the incorrect citation of the Seneca fragments is not due to ignorance of the classic text, on the contrary, Shakespeare's knowledge and domination of Latin plays allowed him to use and adapt them to the specific context and character of his play as I explained in the first chapter of this work.

2.4. The portrayal of gender and race in *Titus Andronicus* as inherited from classical sources:

In the last part of my work, I will focus on the portrayal of women and black men in *Titus Andronicus* through the characters of Lavinia and Aaron. To reach that purpose, I will analyse the evolution that they have among the play as a consequence of the violence that they suffered or carried on. I will also comment the symbolism of these characters which was brought from the classical tradition.

Although the violence affects all the characters directly or indirectly, it cannot be denied that Lavinia is the one who suffered all the consequences of the terrible acts done by others and I think her character's development allows me to introduce some question that I have not mentioned yet. So, in other words, it was her father and brothers who fought in the war against the Goths, but her Queen Tamora blames the whole Andronicus family. As a way of hurting Titus and take revenge for the defeat of her army and the death of her eldest son at the beginning of the play, Tamora encourages Chiron and Demetrius to assault and kill Titus' only daughter. Even though they disobeyed their mother's command and did not murder Lavinia, as I mentioned in chapter two with the amputation of her tongue and hands they took the 'language' away from her. Without the ability to communicate, the character suffers a process of dehumanization helped by the shame and outrage that a rape supposed for a woman in the Elizabethan ages. Even her family treats and refers to her as an object as it can be seen in many parts of the play. For instance, her brother Lucius the first time that he sees her after the assault said: 'This object kills me' (III.I. 65). It seems that Lavinia is no longer a human being, but a constant reminder of the offence she suffered for the whole Andronicus family. At the beginning of act IV Lucius' son enters running from her aunt with a copy of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in his arms. Lavinia was trying to let her family know what happened to her by showing them Philomena's story, but they are afraid of her and it is Titus who through these words reminds them that she is still the sweet Lavinia who used to take care of young Lucius:

Ah, boy, Cornelia never with more care
Read to her sons than she hath read to thee
Sweet poetry and Tully's Orator. (IV.I.15)

Oakley-Brown (333) stresses that Lavinia's association with an object can be seen since the beginning of the play when she is described as 'Rome's rich ornament' (I.I.55). She adds that from these verses Titus is questioning the relationship between women, oratory and rhetoric with maybe an ironic tone. Due to that Lavinia was denied the use of words or gestures, the humanistic idea of rhetoric is enabled in her. In J.L. Simmons' words: 'Lavinia comes almost to represent a violated Lady Rhetorica'(56-68). Following this idea, Bate claims that there is a separation between the character and language (116) after they cut her tongue. Moreover, in these verses, Shakespeare is letting the audience know that Lavinia had a great classic education which was not common in women during Elizabethan days, by mentioning the latin author Tully and the fact that she wanted to use Ovid's episode to tell her family about the crime committed against her.

Following with the development of Lavinia's character through violence, she went from being the innocent victim to the avenger. As I said previously in this work, she actively participates in a violent act by helping her father to murder Chiron and Demetrius in the last act. The next scene where we can see Lavinia is the feast in which her own father kills her in front of the guests being the first of the four deaths that occur during the horrible banquet. I would like to pay special attention to the previous verses to Lavinia's death where Titus asks Saturninus if he considers that Virginius was right to kill his daughter. This is a reference to a real episode of the Roman History when the centurion Lucius Virginius stabbed his own daughter Virginia to avoid that Appius Claudius took her virginity and dishonoured her. Saturninus answered this question by saying that 'Because the girl should not survive her shame, and by her presence still renew his sorrows' (V. III. 41). After the emperor pronounced these words Titus immediately kills Lavinia, who as I said above only was a physical representation of her shame and a sight of sorrow for his father. The statement here is clear: from the moment she was outraged, she was not Lavinia anymore.

Another character that I would like to comment is Aaron. Contrary to the innocent Lavinia, he is presented as an evil character since the beginning of the play. As I mentioned at the introduction of this chapter, Aaron is a second character in act I but he becomes crucial for the development of the plot in the rest of the chapters. The reason why he is considered one of the villains is because of his origin and skin colour. As Emily Bartels said 'Renaissance representations of the Moor were vague, varied, inconsistent, and contradictory [. . .] he was nonetheless described as Other' (435). Aaron is portrayed as the antagonist firstly because of the fact that he is a moor and so he is not a trustful person. Oakley-Brown also comments this topic by adding that 'Christian precepts which help to construct Aaron as 'barbarous', but variable Renaissance discourses converge to make the colour black signify the 'mark of damnation', demonization and eroticisation.' (339).

However apart from the racist arguments, later on in the play he shows up as a true villain because he is partly responsible of Lavinia's rape or the amputation of Titus' hand for instance. It is true that he is the 'brain' behind many horrible plans done by Tamora and her sons, but Aaron is one of the few characters who has not carried out directly a bloody act. Moreover, He is Tamora's lover which was a dishonourable thing in Shakespearean time for two reasons: She is married to the Emperor so they are committing adultery, and the fact that a relationship between a black man and a white women is presented as an abomination. I do not want to focus on the bad act done by Aaron but in the chance of redemption he has. When he knows about his son with Tamora and her command to kill him, he decides to run away to save his life. After being caught by Lucius and when he was about to kill the innocent baby because he considered the newborn an abomination, Aaron confesses all the crimes he has done along with Tamora, Chiron and Demetrius to save his son's life. So as Oakley-Brown pointed out, Aaron's characterisation as a villain is confused in favour of his son (340). Although Aaron confesses his crimes to Lucius he does not regret any of them but rejoice in his horrible acts. So when Lucius asks him if he regrets something, he answers that the only thing he regrets is not having done a thousand crimes more:

Tut, I have done a thousand dreadful things
As willingly as one would kill a fly;
And nothing grieves me heartily indeed
But that I cannot do ten thousand more. (V.I.144)

In the last scene of act V the new emperor Lucius sentences Aaron to die as the punishment for his crimes. So in the case of Aaron, his character is related with the violence but in an indirect way as I said above, because he does not perform any violent act in stage.

Conclusion:

After analyse and comment the main aspects of the play, I reach to the conclusion that the violence is not a simple characteristic of *Titus Andronicus*, but it can be seen as one of the main characters or even the protagonist. There is a personification of the violence among the acts of the play in a symbolic way, but there is also a personification of revenge. In other words, in act V Tamora dresses up as the spirit of Revenge to try to trick Titus and her sons come with her personificating Murder and Rapine. The relationship through these concepts is explained by Tamora herself in the next verses:

‘Tamora: These are my ministers, and come with me.

Titus; Are they thy ministers? What are they called?

Tamora: Rapine and Murder; therefore called so

‘Cause they take vengeance of such kind of men’ (V.II.64)

Through these verses the Queen of Goths is telling Titus that murder and rape are always related with revenge because the person who had carried out such a terrible acts must be punished and this victim should be avenged. This is not a coincidence,, Shakespeare wanted to connect Titus’s desire of revenge on Tamora’s family because of Lavinia’s rape and his sons’ murders which are the name of Revenge’ partners. Obviously the terms rape and murder are strictly connected with violence, but Revenge in the context of the Shakespeare’s play is as well. In conclusion, the three spirits which visited Titus on his house are all derived from violence and thus they are an extension of it.

Finishing with my work and after all these pages about the Shakespearean tragedy, it cannot be denied that the main term related with the story of *Titus Andronicus* is ‘violence’. The violent acts that happen in the play are the central pillar for the development of the plot because the succession of them built the dynamic outline. With

this I mean that with the first act of violence and the consequent desire of revenge of the damaged part, another violent episode and revenge start which sets an endless circle of deaths, as it can be seen in the feast scene where four characters who have been involved with violence die in succession. Violence only generates more violence.

Moreover, the violence is also the main reason for the controversy that the play suffered since it was published. Although it is not the only reason to doubt about Shakespeare's authorship as I mentioned previously on this chapter, it cannot be denied that *Titus Andronicus* presents a wide range of violence that cannot be found in the rest of his plays. The brutality and virulence of the plot are also the principal factor that affected to the growth and decline of its popularity. In other words, depending of the taste of each period of time the gore and butchery in the stage were more or less accepted and enjoyed by the audience.

After the analysis of the similarities of Seneca and Ovid's works with *Titus Andronicus*, it is clear that the Greco-Latin literature was full of violent and brutal acts, especially in the drama where those acts were performed in stage. Because of the classics influence in the Renaissance period, this taste for the gore was brought to the English drama and the authors followed their example to create their works. However as I mentioned before, the audience's preference evolve to a theatre which is richer in content and with less brutality as the Renaissance movement put down roots in the Elizabethan period. In my opinion when the movement started to spread to the continent, the dramatist imitated strictly the Latin plays, especially Seneca's, creating the tragedies of blood. But later on when the authors were experienced enough to read the classics and adapt them to the taste of their own age, they started to reject the virulence and savagery which were characteristic of the Latin tragedies. In the case of Shakespeare, *Titus Andronicus* is one of his first works and consequently he followed the Senecan patterns of violence, but as it can be seen in his later works he evolve to a more sophisticated type of theatre.

In conclusion, *Titus Andronicus* is a play written in the 16 century and based on two classical works from the ancient Rome, and the topics treated in it are still present in our time. This is possibly the reason why many readers and audience understand the play, because it is not so far of our own world. The topics I refer to are: the prejudices based

on racism, the ambition of power at all cost, the fault of the victims of rape and objectification of women because of misogyny, and the exploration of the dark side of human nature through violence which were pointed out among the development of my work.

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