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"MONSTROUS REPRESENTATIONS OF WOMEN IN WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S EARLY MODERN TRAGEDY TITUS ANDRONICUS"

Tesis sometida a la consideración de la Comisión del Programa de Estudios de Posgrado en Literatura para optar al grado y título de Maestría Académica en Literatura Inglesa

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Dedicatoria,

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Resumen

Esta tesis se propuso como objetivo general determinar por qué los personajes femeninos y las nociones y perspectivas sobre el cuerpo y el comportamiento femenino son representados como elementos monstruosos en la obra de William Shakespeare *Tito Andrónico.* La investigación utilizó como metodología una plataforma ecléctica que combinó el enfoque Nuevo Historicista junto con nociones de poder, género, y monstruosidad.

El cuerpo de la tesis se dividió en cuatro capítulos. En el primer capítulo se analizó el contexto histórico y el marco teórico de la tesis, pues el contexto es esencial para el enfoque del Nuevo Historicismo de Stephen Greenblatt. En el segundo capítulo se compararon y contrastaron las anatomías monstruosas femeninas y masculinas para demostrar la relación y diferencias de género entre las representaciones de los personajes masculinos y femeninos basadas en nociones patriarcales y ansiedades sobre el orden y la moral de la época. En el tercer capítulo se analizó la representación de los personajes femeninos principales de la obra en base a sus acciones, limitaciones, y también las percepciones y trato de otros personajes hacia ellas, así como el rol de la violación y la mutilación sobre el cuerpo femenino. Finalmente, en el cuarto capítulo se exploraron las diferencias de género en la venganza al comparar y contrastar las venganzas paternas de Atreo y Tito frente a las venganzas maternas de Hécuba y Tamora.

El propósito de esta tesis fue demostrar cómo la monstruosidad femenina en la obra de William Shakespeare titulada *Tito Andrónico* (1593) está mediada por contextos sociales y nociones patriarcales que repercuten en la representación de los personajes femeninos como elementos monstruosos.

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Introduction

1. Topic/Title

"Monstrous Representations of Women in William Shakespeare's Early Modern Tragedy *Titus Andronicus"*

2. Justification

The Early Modern period witnessed the birth of texts whose characters and literary devices developed engaging narratives that are still considered transcendental milestones for modern literature. Texts from this period portrayed men as tragic heroes in search of justice and noble causes; however, women were often depicted as an aid for male characters or as obstacles and monsters that must be overcome or killed to restore order in society. William Shakespeare belonged to this period and his works exhibit these female representations. From this perspective, the following thesis aims to demonstrate that female monstrosity in the Shakespearian play entitled *Titus Andronicus* (1593) is mediated by social contexts and patriarchal notions. Hence, negative portrayals of women reflect the attitudes of society toward strong female characters who transgress the private sphere in order to grasp political power or to assert the value and grievability[1] of their loved ones, as well as their own. Additionally, apart from the negative portrayals, the text also presents an idealized construction of femininity to contrast with the transgressive and dangerous woman. However, this idyllic femininity also portrays a weak female character that is victimized despite following the rules of her society. While people in early modern contexts considered strong women as monsters or monstrous, they perceived men, who exhibited the same qualities, as both heroic and ambitious. Thus, female monstrosity becomes a social construct

[1] Grievabilityis a term developed by Judith Butler in *Frames of War*. It refers to a person's worthiness of being grieved by others based on his/her usefulness to society.

tied to a deeply political and social context that fears women who disregard social norms and challenge the *status quo,* as well as oppresses women who obey the social norms and who are unfairly punished.

It is pertinent to point out that in mythology, art, and religion, monsters are associated to elements considered marvelous, but they are also related to other divergent concepts. As stated by Mircea Eliade, monstrosity represents a system of constructs in which myths and ideologies (discourses of power) of each culture and time meet. Each time and place determines righteousness and normality; thus, society governs and categorizes its members based on these perceptions. Therefore, Elizabethan times and Renaissance views play important roles in this thesis, for they help explore and determine the monstrous female representations in the play.

In addition, in order to study the role of context, time, and the female gender issue in William Shakespeare's text, I will use a New Historicist approach to analyze the hegemonic discourses that permeate this Shakespearean play and create stereotyped representations of women. In fact, Early Modern tragedies and productions from ancient times echo a hegemonic masculinity that frames female characters into dichotomies and forces them into total submission as docile wives, mothers, and daughters who are at risk of becoming monstrous if they resist the *status quo*. Therefore, a comparison between the female and male characters in the chosen play is needed to determine how the patriarchal context influences the portrayal of women in a world ruled by men. But before starting with these comparisons it is important to clarify some aspects of this play since Shakespeare's text presents some relevant traits which need to be exposed as follows.

Depending on the context and society where the play has been performed, *Titus Andronicus* is either admired or discarded. Today, the importance and originality of its topic

become relevant in our current context where gender issues are constantly being challenged by patriarchal societies. Then, the relevance of this research lies, in part, on the study of two contrasting female heroines in a play whose traditional focus of attention is usually its male hero, as the title of the text shows. In addition, its female characters are not realistic representations of women, but limited or distorted stereotypes based on male anxieties. Therefore, the female characters' analyses will help explore the social constructs of monstrosity as well as its effects and implications on collective and individual levels. Thus, the proposed research is justified and needed in order to expose the social myopia on gender as well as the prejudices and fears that are involved in the concept of monstrosity as a notion that has been created and re-created at different historical times.

3. Range of the Topic

For the purpose of the present research, as mentioned before, I will use a New Historicist approach to analyze William Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*. The social context will be essential in order to unravel Early Modern notions of gender that are present in the female characterizations of the play. Additionally, New Historicism will serve to explicitly politicize an academic discourse "that had often attempted to avoid or conceal partisan or polemical commitment, [and that] unsettles familiar aesthetic hierarchies that had been manipulated, consciously or unconsciously, to limit the cultural significance of women" (Gallagher and Greenblat 11). Consequently, the New Historicist approach complemented by some feminist notions and theoretical views on monstrosity will provide the elements necessary for the study of female monstrosity rooted in Shakespeare's text and influenced by the Early Modern social context. In sum, this research aims to create awareness in regards to the stereotypes that affect female depictions in literature, particularly by showing how either strong or docile

women are defined as either monsters or martyrs who are punished either way for their transgressions and/or actions.

4. Viability of the Project

The object of study proposed in this thesis is viable in terms of available sources and theory. A number of critical texts related to New Historicism, gender approaches, and monstrosity will be used to articulate the methodological framework needed for this type of research. In fact, several works have been written on Early Modern texts and especially on Shakespeare's plays, and on New Historicism as well. Additionally, various studies on gender violence that focus on different time periods, from the classical to contemporary literature, have been taken into account. Some other valuable texts and views that have explained the concept of monstrosity, its origin and traits are also a part of the bibliography. Thus, the pertinent sources will facilitate the study of female monstrosity and will help explore the influence that the Early Modern society had on the portrayals of women as monstrous beings.

5. Problem Statement

How do the socio-historical contexts affect the way in which monstrosity is portrayed in the female characters of William Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*?

6. General Objective

To determine why the female characters and the notions and views of the female body and female behavior are represented as monstrous elements in William Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*.

7. Specific Objectives

1. To examine the historical background of the Early Modern period, the approach of New Historicism and some relevant theoretical views on gender and monstrosity.
2. To compare monstrous female anatomies to monstrous male anatomies in *Titus Andronicus,* in order to show the relation and differences in gender among character portrayals and the patriarchal anxieties on order and morality of the time.
3. To analyze the portrayals of the main female characters, their power and limitations, as well as the others' perceptions and treatment toward them.
4. To explore the gender differences on revenge: Tamora's revenge as opposed to Titus Andronicus's revenge in order to analyze the consequences and effects of these vindictive acts.

8. Synopsis of the Play

Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* takes place at the end of the Roman Empire. After returning from the war against the Goths, Lucius, Titus Andronicus' son, declares that the proudest warrior from the Goths, Alarbus, must be sacrificed. Tamora, Queen of the Goths and mother to Alarbus, begs for his life. But her pleas are ignored and her son is sacrificed. Afterwards, Saturninus, the Roman Emperor, chooses Lavinia, Titus' daughter, as his future wife. However, a dispute ensues when Mutius, Titus' son, tries to convince his father not to marry Lavinia to Saturninus because she is betrothed to Bassianus, Saturninus' brother. Titus becomes enraged and kills his own son for contradicting his order. Saturninus, distressed by Titus' actions, resolves to marry Tamora instead of Lavinia and avoids further confrontations.

On the day of the royal hunt, Tamora and Aaron, Tamora's servant and lover, plot against the Andronici in the forest. Tamora lies to her sons, Chiron and Demetrius, by telling them that Bassianus and Lavinia threatened to kill her. Consequently, Chiron and Demetrius murder Bassianus and rape Lavinia before cutting off her hands and tongue. Marcus, Titus' brother, finds Lavinia bleeding and mutilated wandering in the woods alone and brings her to Titus. Both men lament Lavinia's tragedy and the loss of her virginity. Chiron and Demetrius toss Bassianus' body into a pit and write a forged letter that blames the Andronici for Bassianus' assassination, leading to the imprisonment of Quintus and Martius, Titus' sons. Both are unfairly condemned to die for Bassianus' murder. Aaron convinces Titus to cut off his right hand in exchange for his sons' lives. But after cutting his hand off, Titus is informed that his sons were executed anyway.

Sometime later, Lavinia writes the names of her rapists on the dirt with the stumps of her hands so that her family can avenge her. Titus becomes angry when he finds out who the

rapists are and looks for revenge. Therefore, Titus invites Tamora and Saturninus to a banquet where he feeds the queen the flesh of her own children. Later, Titus reveals his murder of Tamora's sons and she becomes horrified. Subsequently, Titus kills Tamora, and the Emperor kills Titus in revenge. Finally, Lucius, Titus' only surviving son, returns home and kills Saturninus, becoming the new Emperor of Rome.

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Titus Andronicus is one of Shakespeare's earliest plays, written between 1588 and 1593. This play helped shape future plots and characters from other Shakespearean tragedies, as is the case of Iago from *Othello,* who shares evil characteristics with Aaron, and Cordelia from *King Lear,* who resembles Lavinia in her innocence and her great respect for her father. Interestingly enough, the play was initially well received but soon forgotten for many years.

9. Review of Literature

Several critics have embarked in the task of analyzing the Early Modern period (1485-1600) in hope of achieving a better understanding of its literary productions. Some critics have focused their analyses on the female representations that male authors portray in these works. The present literary review will explore the different trends found in existing studies regarding female monstrosity and gender in *Titus Andronicus.* Therefore, the representation of female characters will be analyzed from this perspective. It is important to clarify that critics have studied women in terms of their actions and transgressions as either martyrs or monstrous. Yet, very few have addressed the reasons behind the negative female portrayals based on social or biological differences. The most common views found in these studies consist of female initiative as a masculine trait, female sexuality as a disruption of patriarchal order, female refusal to abide to social norms as a punishable transgression, motherhood as a source of anxiety, and female revenge as a monstrous behavior. Given the arguments listed above, it is significant to study the factors leading to the creation and interpretation of female characters in Early Modern texts in order to understand traditional readings of strong women as either evil or monstrous, as opposed to their male counterparts who are depicted as brave and courageous.

Several feminist critics have scrutinized William Shakespeare's texts to explore his writing and his position towards female characters, as is the case of Virginia Woolf, Theresa Kemp, Juliet Dusinberre, Lisa Jardine, Marianne Novy, and Janet Aldeman, among others. Feminist criticism and theory have been an undeniably invigorating influence on the study of Shakespeare in the past century, and these works have played a crucial role in the continuing interest in Shakespeare's texts. For example, Virginia Woolf in a review that first

appeared in the "Times Literary Supplement 18" (1920), states that female characters in Shakespeare's plays are not what they pretend to be: "Some are plainly men in disguise; others represent what men would like to be, or are conscious of not being" (65). Woolf acknowledges that the women who engage in masculine behavior are set apart from other female characters. Theresa Kemp in *Women in the Age of Shakespeare* (2009), argues that the bard's[2] plays present moral lessons by depicting women as either models to be emulated or as examples on what a woman should not be (masculine, active, transgressive)as seen in the Shakespearean heroines: Lady Macbeth, Goneril, Regan, and Tamora.

Additionally, female characters in Shakespeare's plays have been the object of study of some critics who affirm that the British playwright not only reflected cultural attitudes and notions of his time toward the feminine gender, but he also ventured into the portrayal of transgressive figures. Juliet Dusinberre, in her work entitled *Shakespeare and the Nature of Women* (1996), affirms that the culture in which Early Modern drama evolved was "feminist in sympathy" and that Shakespeare's "attitudes towards women are part of a common stock to be found in the plays of almost all of his contemporaries" (5), which is a different view from other critics who argued that portrayals of women in Shakespeare are often negative. To clarify her views, Dusinberre states that "Shakespeare's strong female characters are the result of the playwright's genius sparking off the ideological catalyst of his time" (305), and that Shakespeare presents women as individuals who challenge early modern female roles (172).

Lisa Jardine in *Reading Shakespeare Historically* (1996) agrees with Dusinberre and contends that Shakespeare's plays present an enlightened view of women; however, unlike

[2]The term "bard" will sometimes be used to refer to William Shakespeare throughout the text.

Dusiberre, Jardine is more cautious in her description of Shakespeare's women as she acknowledges that Shakespeare also depicts representations of women permeated by male anxieties. Therefore, examples of these social anxieties portrayed in female characters can be found in Shakespearean plays where women reject or are unable to pursue motherhood, such as Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth*, or Goneril in *King Lear*. These anxieties are also seen in women who refuse to follow social roles, engage in male behavior or have other-wordly powers such as the witches in *Macbeth*, Queen Margaret in *Henry VI*, Sycorax in *The Tempest*, and Tamora in *Titus Andronicus*, among other Shakespearian heroines. For some critics, these anxieties resulted from the changing attitudes and conditions of women based on the Protestantism and Humanism of the time. Hence, these critics assert that female heroines in Shakespeare's texts are ambivalent portrayals of women who range from positive ideal female characters to negative transgressive and evil beings.

Other critics such as Marianne Novy, Janet Aldeman, and Marilyn French study the dichotomous nature of Shakespeare's heroines and how their societies affect the construction of their identities. Novy, for example, concedes that there are ambivalent and ever changing relationships among the portrayals of women in the Early Modern society. French and Aldeman argue that Shakespeare is not necessarily a feminist, but rather a writer still constrained by culturally assigned binary gender roles that dictate which behaviors are feminine and which are masculine. Aldeman, for instance, in *Suffocating Mothers: Theories of Maternal Origin in Shakespeare* (1992), examines the construction of male identity and the representation of women through fantasies of female sexuality in the Shakespearean tragedies. She asserts that "women in the later tragedies become the locus of male terrors and desires concerning the potential malevolence and contamination of maternal power" (10).

So male terrors will be exemplified through the negative portrayals of women who choose to disregard male order and re-assert their identity and grievability. Irene Dash in *Women's Worlds in Shakespeare's Plays* (1997), as well as Aldeman, concedes that Shakespeare is not necessarily feminist. In fact, some of his female characters are depicted negatively in order to reflect male anxieties against "unfeminine behaviors" and sexual fantasies. In addition, current analyzes of *Titus Andronicus* focus on Titus, the protagonist, as the avenger, and the studies that concentrate on Tamora tend to view her mostly as a vicious model of an anti-mother or as a terrible woman. This view can also be found in Emma Cornila's, Jenna Fitzgerald's, Bernice Harris', and Kelly Sorge's works.

The character of Lavinia has also been a point of discussion among critics. Cornila argues that Lavinia represents the ideal woman for the Romans and becomes a martyr, while Tamora is the barbarian and vicious woman who contributes to the downfall of the Empire. Lavinia, according to Cornila, "shows us what would happen if women did not have any conviction or want for independence" (1). Thus, Lavinia is presented as an ideal Roman woman who abides to the norms and obeys the male figures in the play. Steven Gregg also asserts that Lavinia's behavior is that of the perfect Roman woman, yet, her destiny is one of the most gruesome in *Titus Andronicus.* On her part,Cornila affirms that the only time where Lavinia does not behave passively is when she berates Tamora, a woman and not a man. Thus, by arguing with a woman and not with a man, Lavinia remains a "good woman." Although Cornila perceives Lavinia as a tool used to portray a female ideal that opposes Tamora, Gregg asserts that Lavinia is instead used as a justification for Titus' search for revenge.

In *The Ladies Dreadful: Abjection and Female Agency in Early Modern English Drama* (2011), Nicole Batchelor states that women in Early modern plays both resist and

embrace the patriarchal narrative of the abject female Other. In Lavinia's case, her adherence and willingness to obey, grant her a mode of limited agency to resist the patriarchal gender roles that confine and harm her through Shakespeare's text. Lavinia appears as an object to be won or used. According to Cornila, Lavinia "is not represented as a full-fledged character" (15). In other words, Titus' daughter exists to follow her father and brothers' orders to the point where she passively accepts her murder by the hands of Titus. Even though Lavinia is another victim of the revenge of the Goths, Titus kills his daughter before allowing her to see the retribution for her rape. Gregg agrees that Lavinia's willingness to "perform the female role, even after her rape and mutilation, propels her towards her demise" (9). Consequently, both critics, Gregg and Cornila argue that Lavinia's purpose in the play is to represent the Roman and Early Modern ideal of the "good" woman. Thus, both express that Shakespeare uses Lavinia and Tamora as counterpoints to depict the consequences for women who are overtly passive or overtly aggressive.

Discussing Tamora, Cornila affirms that the Goth queen's actions are free from Roman ideals; consequently, she is perceived by the Romans as a barbarian and an example of what might happen if women are given power. Jenna Fitzgerald concedes that Tamora is Shakespeare's first model of a female avenger; for women in Shakespeare's world are usually portrayed as either weak or evil. Therefore, in *Titus Andronicus* the reader faces these two opposite female portrayals in Lavinia and Tamora. In fact, Tamora begins the play as a good mother that pleas for her son's life; however, she eventually becomes an anti-mother when she engages in her road to revenge. For Kelly Sorge, Tamora's villainy unfolds from her reaction to the horror of her son's murder by Titus' sons. In her essay, "The Gnawing Vulture: Revenge, Trauma Theory, and *Titus Andronicus*" (2002), Deborah Willis affirms: "It is as if the tender hearted mother simply dies with Alarbus and in her place stands an

insulted, vindictive queen" (38). Both Fitzgerald and Cornila agree that Tamora acts out of her own selfishness and her search for power. Sorge, in contrast, asserts that Tamora's actions are fueled with her desire to avenge her son. In fact, the character of Tamora has been more analyzed by the critics than the character of Lavinia.

Jordi Coral, Debora Willis, Jenna Fitzgerald, and Kelly Sorge have focused on Tamora's "masculine" behavior and her willingness to transgress social boundaries in order to live in the private and the social spheres simultaneously. For example, Coral agrees with Fitzgerald that Tamora's behavior is male oriented. Fitzgerald argues that the queen's actions are meant to hurt Titus and his pride which ultimately leads Titus to kill the Goths. In addition, Fitzgerald declares that, like Lady Macbeth, Tamora is a wild character who creates anxiety in men by forcing them to question their identities. So she insults and pushes her male counterparts towards violent acts. Thus, Tamora is a strong and proud woman with a domineering nature that allows her to step outside the private sphere and into the public. In fact, Coral also states that Tamora seeks conflict to satisfy her own needs. The Queen of the Goths struggles to achieve her revenge by casting aside feminine traits, thus, subverting authority and manipulating the men around her. In sum, Tamora's revenge is perceived as evil based on her gender and her actions.

In addition, Tamora's sexuality in the play constitutes a powerful and dangerous attribute, as Kelly Sorge and Bernice Harris state. Both critics agree that Tamora's sexuality represents a potential danger for her male counterparts throughout the tragedy, and her lust ultimately leads her to commit heinous acts that expose male terrors and anxieties towards female autonomy, as well as reflect her refusal to adjust to the *status quo*. Therefore, in *Masking Femininity: Women and Power in Shakespeare's Macbeth, As You Like it, and Titus Andronicus* (2017), Sorge asserts that one of Tamora's powers is her sexuality, which in turn

makes her vicious and dangerous based on her transgressions and powerful actions against men in the play. In her text, *Sexuality as a Signifier for Power Relations: Using Lavinia of Shakespeare's Titus Andronicus* (1996), Harris discusses the fear of female sexuality and asserts: "A woman's ability to have multiple orgasms probably accounted for a more serious concern—that a woman's sexual needs would drive her to illicit sexual couplings" (387). From this perspective, her sexuality and her willingness to transgress social boundaries place Tamora into the realm of the monstrous.

Some critics read Tamora's character as evil and monstrous because of her revenge and the way in which she reacts to violence and murder. According to Sorge, Willis, and Douglas Green quoted in Fitzgerald, Tamora surpasses Titus. Even though he rejects identification with Tamora's culture, Titus is ultimately driven to "barbarous" actions by his enemy, a Goth woman. Fitzgerald and Cornila also recognize that Tamora subverts authority and masculine paradigms through manipulation. Green asserts that Tamora's evil manifests itself early and that she has a subtle power that makes her dangerous. In addition, Carol Thomas Neewly argues that the speeches by female characters as Tamora, though violent and at times cruel in nature, held the ability to captivate and strike fear within their male counterparts. Tamora struggles for equality and seeks revenge to restore balance, yet, she is often perceived as vicious for her revenge and "masculine" demeanor.

Although several critics have analyzed Early Modern works, few texts regarding monstrous representations of female characters study the reasons behind the portrayal of strong women as terrible and dangerous or beautiful women who are victimized and transformed into grotesque bodies. Concerning William Shakespeare's depiction of Tamora and how critics have studied her character, most of them agree that the Queen of the Goths acts as a vicious woman whose revenge is initially justified, but towards the end, her lust

becomes her downfall. The major trend found in the various works from the theorists studied is that these women are considered monstrous mainly as a result of their transgressions of social norms.

Thus, the study of the monstrous representations of women in Shakespeare's play will explore cultural notions of gender based on different discourses that aim to silence women's voices and restrict their social mobility. This research also proposes to fill out a gap in this Shakespearean play, for most traditional studies on *Titus Andronicus* focus on Titus as the hero. In those studies, Tamora and Lavinia are considered stereotypes of convenient polarized women. However, as female characters they demand more exploration.

10. Methodology

The present thesis requires a methodology of description, analysis and interpretation. This research uses a literary corpus, a Shakespearean play that will be submitted to a critical analysis.As a methodological framework, the use of a New Historicist approach will facilitate an exploration of the text focusing on the influence that the historical context of the author had on the creation of his work as well as the historical context depicted in the play itself. In order to carry out this research, readings of the text at social and historical levels will be undertaken. Therefore, this analysis demands not only the text *per se* but also its context. In addition, the approach selected will be complemented by theories and views on gender and monstrosity to develop the thesis topic. In other words, a theoretical eclectic platform will be structured to contemplate a New Historicist approach with critical premises on gender and monstrosity.

The first step of the analysis consists of a study of the Early Modern Period and the historical contexts used by Shakespeare in *Titus Andronicus.* The second step is to identify

the influence of the Early Modern Period on the portrayal of female characters in the tragedy as well as of male characters as a counterpoint strategy using the theories already mentioned. Consequently, a comparative analysis in terms of gender and monstrosity will be developed. In sum, a dialogue between the context and the text will emerge and allow for an analysis that can properly explore the representations of female monstrosity in William Shakespeare's tragedy *Titus Andronicus.*

Regarding the structure of this thesis, the analysis will be divided into four chapters that address monstrosity in various characters in order to asses how female monstrosity is perceived and judged differently. The chapters will explore topics such as: monstrous anatomies, social and moral views of monstrosity, historical contexts and the influence of patriarchy in *Titus Andronicus,* among others.

The first chapter will examine the historical background of the Early Modern period and theories on New Historicism, views of monstrosity, and issues of gender. The second chapter will compare monstrous female anatomies to monstrous male anatomies to show the relations and differences of gender in character portrayals as well as the Roman anxieties on the concepts of order and morality of the time. To develop this chapter, theories on gender and monstrosity, along with a study of the historical context, will help provide a complete analysis to determine those similarities and differences between female anatomies and male anatomies perceived as monstrous. The third chapter will focus on Tamora's depiction as a monstrous being based on her actions against the Roman society in contrast to Lavinia's portrayal as the ideal Roman woman. In order to do this, theories on gender and monstrosity will aid in supporting how these two women are depicted. Finally, the fourth chapter will examine the differences in the judgment placed on revenge. To examine these differences, social views and gender theories will help determine how gender issues influence the

perceptions of revenge, as such exemplified through the cases of Tamora's and Titus' respective revenge. Therefore, by establishing a connection between the socio-historical context from the tragedy and from William Shakespeare's text, this study aims to show how female monstrosity in *Titus Andronicus* is influenced by social context and patriarchal notions that frame women into stereotypes, reflecting male anxieties towards female bodies in terms of sexuality and objectification as well as male fear towards women's ability and power to challenge the *status quo.*

CHAPTER I

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK:

NEW HISTORICAL VIEWS ON GENDER AND MONSTROSITY

Representations of female monstrosity in Early Modern texts are critical issues to New Historicist approaches that aim to re-read and study literary works of some of the most influential writers. From this perspective, William Shakespeare's tragedy *Titus Andronicus* will be analyzed by using New Historicism and other theories in order to create an interdisciplinary approach that will present theoretical perspectives on gender and will explore the concepts of monstrosity, as well. The theories listed above will help readers grasp the reasons behind the portrayal of female submission and the framing of strong women as grotesque and monstrous entities under the gaze of the male collective. The proposed analysis will show how the Early Modern historical context affected the representations of female protagonists as monsters based on their actions, physical appearance, and their adoption or rejection of social moral codes. Although some studies present the female protagonists in these texts as evil and monstrous *per se*, this research will use Stephen Greenblatt's New Historicist approach to understand how context played an important role in the representations of these women who are provided with monstrous traits. Greenblatt's methodology will contribute to unearth the mixture of voices and discourses[3] within the Early

[3]According to Foucault, discourse is defined as systems of thoughts composed of ideas, attitudes, courses of action, beliefs and practices that systematically construct the subjects and the worlds of which they speak (Lessa 290).

Modern period that justify the lynching and destruction of female transgression based on notions of gender.

This thesis aims to uncover the voices of the various discourses that support the reading of deviant and violently transformed women as monstrous by analyzing how monstrosity is portrayed in female as well as in male characters in Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*. Therefore, in order to better understand the portrayals of both women in the play, it is necessary to explore the context in which the play was written and the social expectations of that time. Hence, some questions that drive this thesis are: what female behaviors are considered monstrous or deviant in the Early Modern context? How does the Early Modern culture view the female body in terms of monstrosity? How is female revenge perceived in Early Modern tragedies as opposed to male revenge?

The English rebuilt their society after the black plague[4]. Thus, the restoration of the English society resulted in a cultural movement known as the Renaissance that took place in the Early Modern era, an age that portrays Europe's artistic and literary revolution, after centuries under the influence of the Middle Ages. Unlike the religious motifs of Medieval art and literature, the Renaissance brought about the revival of the Classics and fostered the creation of literary masterpieces that have survived through the centuries and are still being studied today. Drama, as a literary genre, played a preponderant role in the context of the Renaissance. The play selected as the literary corpus of this thesis belongs to that time. Therefore, taking into account the text and the proposed theoretical framework, this first chapter will discuss the birth of theater and its evolution towards the Early Modern period,

[4] The Bubonic plague swept through Asia, Europe, and Africa in the XIV century.

Stephen Greenblatt's approach on New Historicism, and some theories on gender and monstrosity which are relevant to the topic of research.

1.1 The Early Modern Era (1485-1600) and The Rise of English Theater

The Early Modern age marks a prolific and notorious period in arts and literature as a result of the diverse cultural manifestations that were permeating Europe at the time. Leah Whittington asserts that this period was "originally defined in the Victorian era to register what was perceived to be the burgeoning humanism of English life after 1500" (10). At this point, it is pertinent to clarify the term "Early Modern," which is the historic period that began in England after the accession of Henry VII (1485) and ended with the Restoration of Charles II (1660). In fact, the term "modern" is defined by its relation to antiquity and was employed during the Renaissance implying a "progressive economic and administrative rationalization and differentiation of the social world" (Sarup qtd. in Hrubes 130). On their side, Karl Marx and Max Weber visualize the period as a "historical periodizing term which refers to the epoch that follows the 'Middle Ages' or Feudalism' " (qtd. in Best 2). In other words, the name of the period was deeply attuned to the cultural process that was an essential catalyst for the improvement of the "early modern" perceptions of society and modernity (Withington qtd. in Best 10).

In addition, the period witnessed many important historical events: the invention of the printing press (1450), the War of the Roses (1455-1487), the rise and fall of the Tudor Dynasty (1457-1509), the Reformation (1534), the Gunpowder Plot of 1605, the arrival of the Pilgrims in the New World (1620), the outbreaks of civil wars after the ascension of Charles I (1625), and the end of the Stuart reign at the beginning of the eighteen-century. It is important to point out that armed conflicts during the Tudor and Stuart dynasties helped

improve the use of weapons, and so the British economy offered opportunities for companies that created arms and warlike artifacts that were used in those conflicts. In sum, the revolts that resulted from social instability changed an English community that shifted from "one founded on the concepts of hierarchy, uniformity, and personal loyalty to one founded on the concepts of difference" (Abrams 1073). Aside from armed confrontations, the bubonic plague (1348) killed more than half of the population in Europe, thus leaving the survivors and their descendants to reach the Early modern Age with the task of rebuilding their societies and cultures, and so they were motivated by a feeling of rebirth.

1.1.1 The Revival of the Classics

Prior to discussing the role of theater and its influence, the revival of the Classics must be addressed. The rediscovery and reappropiation of the Greek arts by the Europeans of that time support their interest in a group of English scholars known as the "Oxford Group" who endeavored in the task of studying classical works and molding their present from the past of great civilizations. The group brought forth a rebirth of letters and arts based on a new aesthetics influenced by texts and norms of Classical antiquity (Abrams 396). The revival commenced in Italy with the creation of sculptures based on ancient motifs and spread all over Europe and other artistic fields.

As many artists adopted the new trend, the Classical influence became discernible in architecture, art, music, and literature. Italy's kinship with the ancient civilizations expedited the interest in Greek and Roman cultures, thus resulting in the scholars' utilitarian motive that sought to exploit Classical antiquity for modern man (Highet 20). Scholars and literati such as William Grocyn, Polydore Vergil, Thomas Reid, David Hume of Godscroft, and Gian

Vittorio Rossi, to name a few, began translating written texts in an effort to assist their study and imitation of the Classics for cultural and academic purposes. In England, schools incorporated Greek and Latin in their curriculum to prompt reading in the original languages and learning about the cultures of the ancient world. The mandatory inclusion of Greek and Latin texts in the educational system became a source of inspiration for Early Modern writers such as Christopher Marlowe, Thomas Kyd, Thomas Middleton, and William Shakespeare, among others, as can be seen through the construction of their characters and motifs of many of their plays. Classical influences enabled writers to conceive engaging and structured artistic manifestations, especially in theater where playwrights attempted to eclipse their ancestors' works. In sum, the influence of the Classics is observable in the structure of plays, motifs, and characters. Different playwrights fashioned direct allusions to the ancient Greek civilization in their plays to pay homage to their literary forefathers; Shakespeare was no exception.

Ideologies and beliefs were unleashed through cultural manifestations in education, art, and literature that were deeply rooted in the social development of Elizabethan subjects. Curricular plans were modified to include classical influences: "education was ordered according to the subjects of the medieval trivium (grammar, logic, and rhetoric) and the quadrivium (arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music) but with new emphasis on rhetoric and classical texts" (Abrams 397). Writers of the Renaissance replicated "all the newly found devices of sentence-structure and paragraph-structure, or versification, of imagery and rhetorical arrangement" (Highet 19) in their texts, in an attempt to transcend the Greeks and the Romans. The rediscovery of classical culture in this period involved an expansion in "the powers and resources of all the arts-sculpture, architecture, painting, and music too and a closer, more fruitful alliance between them" (Highet 21).

Therefore, the revival of the Classics in England improved education through the inclusion of a more culturally diverse curriculum that diverted from the ecclesiastical doctrines of the Medieval era. Consequently, grammar schools cradled some of the most lucid minds of the Renaissance and avowed for a new future for the modern man. Along with education, the improvement of infrastructure helped European society in the mobilization of resources through territories. As a result, transportation and infrastructure shortened distances and prompted international relations. As the economy increased, so did the opportunities for citizens to engage in ludicrous activities, which, in turn, incremented the proliferation of literary productions such as plays.

Parallelisms are evident when comparing Greek and Early Modern cultures where citizens could engage in cultural and leisure activities due to the social order that each society gradually acquired through either slavery in the case of the Greeks or by means of an economic stability in the case of the Early Modern society. So, economic stability and cultural proliferation helped to improve social order by providing citizens with a sense of security that was often threatened and recovered in the representation of many plays of the period. Writers often depicted chaotic royal families and unstable kingdoms in their texts as a social critique which ended when the heroes installed order. They were received by audiences that cheered the murder of villains and invaders by the hand of brave princes and nobles who could restore the order and save the kingdom. Thus, the theater was a means of presenting their desirable stability. Unfortunately, such stability is neither perceived in the female characters nor in the social gender roles.

1.1.2 The Theater and its Impact

The first records of theater in the Western World date back from the 6th century in Athens, where tragedies, satirical plays, and comedies "were thought to be the center of the Ancient's cultural life, which seemed often empty without theater presentations" (Gorgoussopoulou qtd. in Highet 268). In addition, a number of theorists believe that theater evolved from religious rituals held for the God Dionysus. In fact, the earliest account on the origins of theater comes from Aristotle's *Poetics*. The Greek philosopher claimed that drama was produced by the authors of the dithyrambs (choral hymns dedicated to Dionysus) and comedy by the authors of the phallic songs (songs performed at religious festivals, especially during fertility rituals).

Although Aristotle's theory is one of the most well-known accounts of the origin of theater, there are at least four other theories including the ritual theory[5]: the great man theory[6], the story telling theory[7], and the dance theory[8]. In regards to the relevant role of theater in society, Nigel Rodgers explains in *The Ancient Greek World, People and Places: Art, Architecture, Theater, Gods and Myths, and Culture* (2010), that while "the entrance cost 2 obols, an unskilled worker's daily wage, a fund provided free entry for the poorest" (164). Thus, the Greek valued the importance of theater in the lives of their citizens to the point that they would help the poorest to have access to the performances. Even female citizens, as spectators, were admitted in the theater during the 4th century B.C.

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[5]This theory argues that drama evolved from religious rituals dedicated to the Greek God Dionysus.

[6] This theory proposes that drama was created by a talented artist who probably merged elements that already existed in society.

[7]Some scholars believe that drama evolved from the art of storytelling into a more complex representation.

[8]The dance theory states that movement was the core of drama since dancers would imitate animals dressed in skins and garments.

The importance of theater within society was also part of the Early Modern period. Classical influences on Early Modern drama "unleashed new ideas and new social, political, and economic forces that displaced the otherworldly and communal values of the Middle Ages" (Abrams 396). The European dramatists of the Early Modern age assimilated much of the classical drama, after re-reading, incorporating, adapting, and imitating classical texts. These playwrights and critics even named the dramatic genres after their Greek names: drama, comedy, and tragedy.

1.1.3 Tragedies: Human Dramas on Stage

The origin of the word "tragedy" comes from the Greek word *tragoidia*. The term comes from two words - *tragos*, meaning goat, and *oidia*, meaning song "possibly because the chorus wore goat skins, or a goat was sacrificed or there was a price of a goat" (Adkins 258). The plays consisted of choral songs, dialogues, and some dance, although not much has been found about the kind of dances performed on the stage. Ian Storey, Roy Adkins, Nigel Rodgers, Will Durant, and Gilbert Highet state that the actors wore masks depending on the part that they performed. Tragedies were very popular. They represented stories based mostly on myths that usually concluded with tragic endings. So, tragedies normally consisted of:

> A prologue (*prologos)*, with a monologue or dialogue introducing the play before the entrance of the chorus. . . Next came a *parados,* a song performed by a chorus as it entered. This was followed by *epeidodia* (sin. *Episodion*), scenes or episodes with the actors and chorus. These were divided by *stasima*, songs performed by the chorus. . . After the last stasimon came the final scene *or* exodus (Adkins 259).

In fact, other contributions from Classical theater can be observed in Early Modern dramatic texts. Some examples are intricate plots, the modern dramatic verse (in an attempt to rival the eloquence of the Greeks and Romans), the use of a chorus, the division of the acts and the duration of the plays which lasted twenty-four hours within the texts (Highet 130). Even the presence of ghosts in plays to incite revenge was a Greek literary device that was later used in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and The *SpanishTragedy*. It is also important to point out that Seneca, the famous Roman philosopher, was a major influence in tragedies. Playwrights, being Shakespeare one of them, were impressed by Seneca's devices to conjure the darker sides of life such as: " . . . witchcraft and the supernatural (as in *Macbeth*), madness impending or actual (as in *Hamlet, The Spanish Tragedy, The Duchess of Malfi*), the display of torture, mutilation, and corpses (as in *King Lear, Titus Andronicus, Orbecche)* and stage murder" (Highet 133). Thus, these subjects were usually used and represented by the playwrights of the Renaissance.

The theater influenced the way of life and thought of the Greeks by providing audiences with tragic heroes and heroic deeds that established models of behavior as well as restrictions for ordinary citizens. The theater constituted a driving force in the Early Modern society that gave citizens a chance to relive heroic deeds and tragedies that had existed since ancient times and that were adopted into their own context. However, the transition from the Classics to Medieval drama was problematic since during the Middle Ages, the Church exercised a strict control over cultural manifestations. Hence, the strict control over artistic and literary productions translated into a shift from classical heroes to new and biblical figures whose role was to transmit stories and teachings from the Bible to peasants and nobles. Therefore, Medieval theater included moral plays, liturgical drama, mystery plays,

farces, and masques; all these artistic productions were used as vehicles to teach biblical stories and didactic lessons supported by the Church.

Unlike the Middle Ages, in the Early Modern period many "companies" or group of actors were founded and, some received gold in exchange for performing before Queen Elizabeth and garner critical acclaim across England. According to Greenblatt, there were more than twenty companies at that time. Some of the most renowned were: King's Revel Men, Lady Elizabeth's Men, Queen Elizabeth's Men, The Admiral's Men, The Children of Paul's, The Lord Chamberlain's Men, and the King's Men, among others (2004: 28-29). Playwrights such as Ben Johnson, Christopher Marlowe, and William Shakespeare were members of some of these companies and carried out plays for the Queen. In fact, companies that performed for the Queen acquired a series of benefits that improved their overall status in the English society.

Queen Elizabeth's reign fostered the transformation of the nobility and gentry into courtiers who collected the benefits from their petitioners after presenting their work to the court. Being a courtier represented a great honor in a society that valued the Queen's court and its influence on stately matters. In addition, a patronage system was implemented to encourage writers to devise works that could be performed or read in the court and for the Queen. Literary patronage was then "part of the interlocking patronage system whereby grants, offices, and honors were exchanged for service and praise" (Abrams 401). Hence, notorious playwrights received financial rewards for their works, as was the case of Christopher Marlowe, George Peele, Thomas Middleton, Thomas Mash, John Kyd, and William Shakespeare, among others. This system of rewards could influence Shakespeare in writing plays based on themes that would reinforce the royal power, satisfy the Queen and earn her favor.

During Queen Elizabeth's reign, the theater scene, or "Shakescene" as Stephen Greenblatt calls it, was prolific and full of rivalries between playwrights who aspired to attain the favor of the court. In spite of the promise of monetary rewards, courtiers often had to work in another craft since patronage alone was rarely enough to survive in the Elizabethan society (Greenblatt 2004: 199). In the late sixteenth-century, the growth of the urban population, the market for new plays, and the emergence of public theaters enabled the presence of a group of playwrights whose works would define an era. According to Abrams, the educational system introduced a newfound interest for literature and rhetorical effects as well as for complex plays and a restless intellectual culture (240). As a result, many of the leading writers flaunted their college education in top schools such as Oxford or Cambridge, a privilege that Shakespeare did not have.

Greenblatt contends that a group of writers, which existed in the late 1580's, consisted of Christopher Marlowe, Thomas Watson, Thomas Lodge, George Peele, Thomas Nashe, and Robert Greene (200). This group was famous for their erratic lives and arrogant snobbishness, which resulted in a series of unfortunate events for some of its members (such as Marlowe's death in a brawl, Greene's death due to his partying, and Peele's death by what doctors believed to be syphilis) who did not live beyond their forties. In fact, Thomas Lodge was the only member of the group that managed to live to the age of sixty-seven (Greenblatt 2004 211-212). Although Shakespeare had encountered this company, he was probably undermined since he did not have a degree from either Cambridge or Oxford as they had. However, Shakespeare's greatness and influence as a playwright surpass his contemporaries up to our day.

1.1.4 William Shakespeare: The Bard

Some of his contemporaries perceived William Shakespeare as a threat due to his rapid success and wits that earned him his patronage and the Queen's favor. Most members of the group of playwrights of the time resented Shakespeare for lacking a college degree and so earning the public's favor and respect despite having a provincial origin. The Bard, as Shakespeare was known, knew that in spite of his success as a writer, the group would always view him as a player and not as a poet because of his background. According to Greenblatt, although his peers underestimated him, the Bard turned their snobbishness into a resource that he would inscribe later on in his characters. Shakespeare "made their acquaintance and savored what was startling or amusing about their reckless lives" (2004: 209) to give those characteristics to his own characters. Later on, Shakespeare would include references or characters based on some of these writers as a response to their snobbishness towards him (2004: 217).

Unlike many of his peers, William Shakespeare was raised in the countryside away from crowded London. Even though his parents were not literate, they sought a proper education that would allow their son to become a respected member of society. Back in the Renaissance, society valued knowledge in arts, Latin, and literature. For example, most successful citizens had learned to speak and write Latin in an effort to emphasize their knowledge of the Ancient World. Therefore, several writers received their education and inspiration from classical texts studied during their academic life.

William Shakespeare drew his inspiration from several elements of his context such as morality plays, royal disputes, countryside ideals, and even from plays written by some of

his peers[9]. In fact, morality plays provided writers with a starting point from which they adapted their own characters and stories into new thrilling and colorful tales of love, passion, treason, and revenge, which were depicted in intricate plots. For example, acts of treason and wars allowed viewers to accompany the heroes of the stories into a journey of rightfulness and self-discovery that often culminated with the death of the villains. Audiences enjoyed Shakespeare's plays such as *Henry VI, Hamlet, King Lear, Macbeth, The Spanish Tragedy*, *The Changeling*, and *TheDuchess of Mafi* because they gave people a chance to witness the conflicts of noble characters with royal origins. Audiences longed to see plays that provided insights into royal affairs and lives. Hence, Shakespeare included these elements into his texts as well as the countryside and pastoral motifs of his background which depicted a completely different lifestyle from most Londoners.

While some authors whose origins were linked to the countryside chose to distance themselves from their roots, Shakespeare embraced the pastoral and distanced himself from the urban. As Stephen Greenblatt asserts in *Will in the World*: "there was nothing defensive in the ways Shakespeare distanced himself, no stiff-necked insistence on his sophistication or learning, no self-conscious embrace of the urban or the courtly" (41). In fact, Shakespeare's stay in Avon inspired him to include pastoral images into his work as can be seen in *Twelfth Night* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The Bard used his countryside roots to create scenes for his plays and poems. In short, William Shakespeare used his background to gather inspiration for his writings. He combined elements from his everyday life and captivated readers with their complexity and resemblance of their own lives. Therefore, the study of the elements present in Shakespeare's context and life as well as his admiration

[9]Marlowe's *Tambourline* was a text that inspired Shakespeare to write his famous trilogy *Henry VI.*

towards the Classics will contribute to guide the analysis of his female characters in *Titus Andronicus* through means of the representation of women in his tragedy.

The next section will elaborate on the use of New Historicism as well as it will show how critical studies of gender and monstrosity will aid in the re-interpretation of the selected play. Each theory is a part of an interdisciplinary discourse where different aspects within the historical context from the Early Modern period will prove how traditional readings of strong women depicted as monstrous are based on biased (male) histories, fears, and desires, while submissive and obedient women are destroyed by following patriarchal rules.

1.2 Theories on New Historicism, Gender, and Monstrosity

The following critical approaches are essential to the proposed analysis due to the various interpretative readings that they provide for the portrayal of women as monstrous along with some male characters that will be analyzed as counterpoints for this study. New Historicism will also help uncover the voices in the margins of a historic context where cultural Otherness, aesthetics and morality dictated a person's worth in society. Studies on power will provide support to determine how the labels of monstrosity are essential in the framing of individuals' worth and responsibilities, based on their adherence or rebellion to the *status quo*. Hence, gender theories along with studies on monstrosity will be crucial in determining how female characters are portrayed as monstrous based on their refusal to accept abuse, or how even submissive female behavior leads to eminent destruction in order to protect and reproduce patriarchal notions of order and perfection. In sum, the Early Modern society generated these views, and a New Historicist approach will explore and expose the reasons of such portrayals.

1.2.1 New Historicism: Critical Premises and Power Relationships

New Historicism arose as a revolution against textualism and traditional historicism that contemplated history as one universal and objective truth. According to Scott Wilson, Historicism dominated literary scholarship up until the 1940s but passed out of favor after World War II. In the United States, New Historicism began in the 1980s with Stephen Greenblatt, Catherine Gallagher, D.A. Miller, Louis Montrose, among others. However, British Materialism had already explored some of these views. Often referred to as Cultural Materialism, British Materialism was defined as the study of historical material within a politicized framework. This movement began in the 1950s with the work of F.R Leavis, heavily influenced by Matthew Arnold's analyses of bourgeois culture (Wilson 7). These two critical approaches, British Materialism and New Historicism see literature as an indicator of historical forces.

In fact, New Historicism seeks to study literature as an expression of forces in history and how these forces affect the creation of texts. According to Harmon, New Historicism "tends to be social, economic, and political, and it views literary works (particularly Renaissance dramas and Victorian novels) as instruments for the displaying and enforcing of doctrines about conduct, etiquette, and law" (350). New Historicism also studies how these instruments and doctrines are present in the text and how they affect the author. Consequently, New Historicism does not classify history as a one-sided universal truth, but rather, as a set of views and histories that are constantly interacting with one another in the creation of meaning.

Since the text constitutes a cultural product, the New Historicist critic focuses on the social forces and cultural elements that permeate the context where the text was produced. This emphasis on social forces helps unravel the subject positions and mechanisms of power that affect the different groups who interact in their context. These groups basically consists of hegemonic groups and subordinate groups which are being oppressed by the first one. It is through this oppression that the conflict arises within the text. In addition, this conflict gives way to an array of voices that help the critic understand how and which social forces permeate the text and result in the different portrayals of the subjects presented in the narrative. In sum, New Historicists are interested in how "collective representational systems work in the reproduction and contestation of power" (Ryan 129).

It is pertinent to clarify that the New Historicist approach aims at destabilizing history and seeks the voices that live in the margins, and the stories that connect through complex exchanges with various cultural representations. Greenblatt and Clifford Geerz state that culture is "a set of control mechanisms—plans, recipes, rules, instructions . . . for the governing of behavior" (3), and as such, culture controls individuals through the imposition of rules, roles, and behaviors that define society. As a consequence of the exchange of representations and stories, culture permeates discourses and social productions that allow for the fashioning of identities in society.

In addition, New Historicism assumes that every culture is a mixture of perspectives, worldviews, and positions from various groups in society. This approach does not agree with traditional views of hegemonic groups that accept one and only "historical" truth. According to Meyer and Pacheco, New Historicists "emphasize the importance of context: [where] each product must be examined within the cultural contexts because the time, place, and participants all influence that product and how it is received or understood" (40).

Consequently, this literary approach assumes that contexts are constantly changing and depend on different variables that affect the literary products and their authors. As a result, New Historicists identify the subjects and their positions within the texts. Meyer and Pacheco affirm that the New Historicist critic "looks for the main issue at stake in the text (important areas of struggle) and examines both how the different groups represented in the text align themselves in terms of those issues and what that suggests about the web of interacting forces and elements in that society at that point" (41). Thus, Greenblatt's New Historicist approach helps understand how portrayals or depictions of characters are social constructs and how forces and intentions take place within those constructions. In other words, New Historicism provides a form of subversion or the subversive agency needed to reveal a voice or voices that had been previously silenced in different texts.

As stated before, New Historicism searches for the voices in the margins that provide a re-reading of history by demonstrating how the context and the culture of each time fashion the self and the literary productions as well. Chung-Hsiung Lai, for example, states that "New Historicism, mainly based on Foucault's theories, offered just such a critique of history. It revamped basic concepts concerning literary production and asserted that 'history cannot be divorced from textuality' " (2). In fact, New Historicism offers a dialogue between texts and history that enriches the analysis by providing the opportunity to approach a text while simultaneously analyzing the histories around the text. From this perspective, Veestra affirms that:

> Greenblatt's detailed perceptive analyses emphasize that a text is informed by the same cultural dialectics as a society at large. A text reflects as well as supports this dialectics or, to put it differently, a sociohistorical context conditions its textual

> representations and likewise a text informs and sometimes even conditions the historical process (8).

In other words, the notion of humanism that considered men to be autonomous and free transcending creatures has no place in Greenblatt's theory since the human self is perceived as a social construct. Besides, the author and his/her context will inevitably affect the creation of the text, and so the context permeates the text. It is pertinent to point out that Greenblatt uses these views to develop his theory of "self-fashioning."

The term "self-fashioning" was coined by Greenblatt in his book *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (2005) to describe a form of manipulation that creates specific individuals by governing the passage from abstract potential to concrete historical embodiment (3-4). The results of self-fashioning are individuals molded to fit their time and rules, fashioned after the hegemonic structures and ideology that govern each aspect of culture and society. Self-fashioning "occurs at the point of encounter between an authority and an alien . . . [because] any achieved identity always contains within itself the signs of its own subversion or loss" (Greenblatt 9). This process involves submission to an absolute power or authority, achieved in opposition to an alien Other (this Other must be discovered or invented in order to be destroyed). Through such a process, individual identity is re-shaped and re-defined by social expectations.

New Historicism seeks to reveal the relationship between texts and their socio-historical contexts by assuming that the texts not only document social forces that inform and constitute history and society, but they also feature prominently in social processes which fashion both the individual identity and the socio-historical context. In addition, literary productions and other symbolic goods circulate in society via channels of negotiation and

exchange that contribute to the distribution of social energy[10]. Marlon Ross, in his work "Contingent Predilections*"* (1990) , affirms that literature exemplifies "the play of deferred agency and power that occurs as we fashion ourselves within a history that prefashions us" (523). So history molds, restrains, and frames the identity of individuals within their respective contexts. Thus, the power to fashion the self controls identity. It was a power exercised in the 16th century by the State, the Church, and the family, and a power observed in Shakespeare's play.

Greenblatt, unlike Karl Marx, believes that capitalism constitutes a positive force that produces social energies which in turn favor the interactions of individuals within society: "In the atmosphere of negotiation and exchange, of circulation of different currencies, the borders between individuals, nations, different classes, and social circuits are easily crossed and hence called into question" (qtd. in Veestra 185). A single artist does not generate social energy nor does one single person control it; social energy is appropriated, purchased, or symbolically acquired through means that involve a social exchange such as theatrical performances. In fact, meaning and social energy are synonymous in Greenblatt's theories. Greenblatt strongly believes that during a performance social energy shifts from audiences to society to return once again to the performance, to the stage in the form of interpretation and meaning (Veestra 187). For example, texts, as social productions or social artifacts, are exchanged in society and are able to affect individuals and their context. So dramatic performances allow the circulation of social energies and the re-interpretations and creation of meaning from the stories told from the stage. Thus, New Historicism contributes to politicizing texts and re-discovering the ties between the text and the sociohistorical

[10]This kind of energy refers to the intensities of experience that give value and meaning to life and that are indispensable to the construction of self-awareness and identity.

environment in order to create awareness and uncover the role of history and society as driving forces or power in the production of meaning.

Michel Foucault's theories about history and power heavily influenced the views of New Historicism. Steven Best and Douglas Kellner affirm that Foucault rejects the notion that reason, emancipation, and progress are interdependent by stating that "an interface between modern forms of power and knowledge" has contributed to the rise of new forms of control (34). According to Best and Kellner, the French philosopher attempted to reinterpret modern power in a non-totalizing, non-representational, and anti-humanist scheme (48). Thus, Focault developed a theory in which power is a fluid, dispersed, heteromorphous, a subjecteless force that shapes individual identity and body. Unlike Marxist critics who reduce power to a negative unitary force, Foucault asserts that one should approach power through the understanding of the various discourses that permeate and circulate power and its relations. Although in some of his works Foucault also argues that power could work as a repressive/oppressive force, after the rise of his theories, power is no longer understood as destructive and repressive. In fact, in his text *Discipline and Punishment* (1995), Foucaultrevisualized power as the option of being productive, due to its possibility of fostering and generating positive results in society.

In opposition to traditional power theories where power is objective or emancipatory, Foucauldian thought emphasizes that knowledge cannot be severed from power regimes in society. The circular relation between power and knowledge leads to the concept of power. These relations are made effective as a result of practices and technologies of exclusion, surveillance, confinement, and objectification. Thus, social disciplines such as psychology, criminology, and sociology contributed to the development, refinement and distribution of more advanced techniques of power (Best, Kellner 50). Moreover, Foucault asserts that

institutions were created to observe and experiment on individuals to impose social control: "The modern individual became both object and subject[11] of knowledge, not 'repressed' but positively shaped and formed within the matrices of 'scientific-disciplinary mechanisms,' a moral/ legal/ psychological/ medical/ sexual being 'carefully fabricated'. . . " (1995: 217). Although institutions claimed to "positively shape" individuals, Foucault's writings also demonstrate that hegemonic institutions imprison and punish individuals to obtain knowledge or delegitimize forms of knowledge that oppose the beliefs of powerful groups.

Foucault's theories evolved and changed throughout time; however, his texts helped to understand the duality of power as both a possibility for change and also as a form of control. Punishment, for example, became a mechanism of control that helped "shape" those who chose to rebel against power structures. Undoubtedly, Foucault's contributions helped New Historicism through its analysis on power relations and their influence on the individuals, for New Historicism demonstrates how the context, which is heavily influenced by power relations, affects the writer and his/her literary productions.

In her work *Frame of War* (2009), Judith Butler, another philosopher, reinforces the concept of power by defining "life" as follows: "The 'being' of life is itself constituted through selective means; as a result, we cannot refer to this 'being' outside of the operations of power" (1). And this "being" is framed through "others, norms, and to social and political organizations, that have developed historically in order to maximize precariousness for some and minimize precariousness for others" (Butler 2). As a result, power structures dictate whether an individual's life can be apprehended or not if they consider that this 'life' or 'being' has been produced according to norms that deem it as a life. Consequently, there are

[11]Foucault understands the term "subject" as someone who is commanded to another by control and dependence. He also understands "subject" as a term related to identity and conscience of self-knowledge.

lives that are apprehended as lives and others that are not and: "there are 'subjects' who are not quite recognizable as subjects, and there are 'lives' that are not quite—or, indeed, are never—recognized as lives" (Butler 4). Adherence to the system and willingness to follow the hegemony can produce a benefit that makes a life grievable. Consequently, those lives that present no value to the system are ungrievable and are forced to live in the shadows on the margins of society.

Systems of power determine the worth of each life and in the same manner, they can dispose of said lives without any repercussions since the worth of a life can never surpass the needs of the hegemony. As a consequence of living socially, it is through social framing imposed by hegemonic powers that a life's worth is determined and apprehended. Power relations intervene in this process since they determine the precariousness of a life. For example, the lives that are ungrievable have been forced into the shadows, and for them to emerge from the margins, they need recognition from the Other. Then it is through acts of solidarity, social resistance and outcry that the grievability of a life can be manifested. The lives of those who belong to an oppressed group are condemned to precariousness and lack of apprehension that lead to abuse, torture, and death. Then, power relations and structures determine the fate of the subjects, and those who are considered as inferior by the hegemony are at risk of becoming precarious, thus, ungrievable and unnecessary. The female collective constitutes a body of lives that are considered somewhat grievable depending on their contributions to society, but for the most part, women are perceived as ungrievable when compared to men. These double standards are present in Shakespeare's play where the socio-historical context plays a fundamental role in gender perceptions and norms.

1.2.2 Historical Contexts and their Standards and Values

The historical contexts of *Titus Andronicus* and of Shakespeare's time will help to visualize the portrayal of female characters in the play. In fact, Roman and Early Modern contexts intertwine in Shakespeare's play by means of the representation of the female characters. Therefore, before starting the literary analysis, it is essential to understand what the Roman and Early Modern standards of beauty, normality, and restraint were, in order to realize how these notions affected the portrayal of Shakespeare's characters. The Roman Empire, as stated before, lived under patriarchal rules in which very specific standards for women were created. It was a society where the word father or *pater* was linked to the *paterfamilias,* patrimony and power, and the word mother or *mater* was instead linked to matrimony and therefore, family. As a consequence, Roman women had to follow strict rules of behavior in order to become accepted in their society. The historian Sara Casamayor traced the ideals of female standards of normality and decency that were imposed upon Roman women. In her book *Casta, pia, lanifica, domiseda: modelo ideal de feminidaden la Roma tardorrepublicana,*Casamayor states that since birth Roman women were given only one name while boys were given up to three names (6), emphasizing with this the importance that Roman society gave to males. In addition, education was focused on intellectual improvement for men while women were groomed for marriage, so that they would become "proper citizens" for the Empire. In short, women's aspiration was to become a matron with her own family. Their lives revolved around family, religion, and *domus* (the house). Consequently, wives were expected to behave dutifully and abnegated and to respect their husbands in order to establish a well-balanced society.

Marilyn Yalom in her text *History of the Wife* (2001) discusses the position of women as wives through time. According to this critic, marriage became a political alliance where women consisted of a commodity for men. As such "control over women passed 'naturally' from fathers to husbands. Married women were expected to behave according to the dictates of—a code word for strict morality, including its literal meaning 'chastity' " (25). And so, marriage turned women into objects whose wealth was directly linked to material possessions and their ability to procreate citizens for the Empire/State. Therefore, the male appropriation of female property followed the laws and, at the same time, it binded women to fulfill their life purpose as dutiful and abnegated wives whose sole role was to uphold morality and follow their husbands' commands.

While the *materfamilias,* or the mother, was in charge of raising her children and obeying her husband, the *paterfamilias* possessed power in the public and private spheres and the protection of the law. Casamayor also shows how other critics like Amelia Castresana stressed the importance of female virtues and morality in the life of Roman women who had to be ". . . close to the ideal of femininity, endowed with exceptional virtues and away from the weaknesses of her sex . . . educated in modesty, shame and austerity, obedient to the dictates of her husband" (9). Women's ultimate purpose was to give birth to future Romans, raise them, and also dedicate their lives to serving their husbands until death. While men fought for Rome and were able to speak freely in any given space, "[t]he only public sphere in which women were allowed to participate regularly was religion, which also served to set models of female behavior" (Casamayor 12). Another prevalent duty for these women was chastity. Marilyn Skinner stated that chastity and fertility of a daughter gave Roman families the same prestige as the military and civic successes of a son (qtd. in Casamayor 12). The purpose of this rule was to prevent the birth of illegitimate children that would affect a

father's lineage. As a result of all these notions, Roman women were expected to behave accordingly, which means that their purpose was to serve the *paterfamilias*, respect the men around them, and procreate for the sole purpose of providing the Empire with future citizens.

For men, the expectations differed since they possessed more power than their female counterparts. According to Raewyn Connell "the pattern of masculinity . . . occupies a position of centrality in a structure of gender relations, and [its] privileged position helps to stabilize the gender order as a whole, especially the subordination of women" (4). Taking into account the role of masculinities in the study of their conception in Rome, Sofia Gonzales states that *Virtus*[12], as a socially constructed notion, stands for the ideal of what a Roman man should aspire to have. As such, a man with *virtus* was expected to participate in the political life of Rome, to be versed in Latin and Greek literature as well as to have an active character: *Virtus* men, unlike women, were encouraged to participate in the public sphere, where they were highly praised and honored. Women instead were supposed to behave submissively and attend their roles within their family and private sphere.

While Rome developed its own standards of beauty and morality, the Early Modern period used many of these ancient notions and applied them to its society. Anu Korhonen studied the perceptions of beauty and décor in Early Modern England. Korhonen states that "heavily gendered concept of bodily beauty was an essential discursive tool for envisioning femininity and masculinity, and indeed women's visibility. . ." (336). As such, beauty was a determining element for Early Modern society beauty and its standards followed Greek and Roman ideals of perfection and aesthetics. These standards were decisive in the categorization of gender roles. Accordingly, "Early modern knowledge of beauty assigned

[12] Roman virtue of courage, manliness, excellence, and masculine strength.

subject and object positions that made women and men what they were, positioning women as the looked-at sex and men as the primary" (Korhonen 336). In sum, the Early Modern period valued good looks in men and women; thus, any trait that was not considered aesthetically balanced was then perceived as negative. Therefore, the Roman and Early Modern periods shared their love for symmetry, beauty, and morality, aspects that are violated throughout *Titus Andronicus* by both, female and male characters who constantly transgress order and descend into chaos.

In terms of physical beauty, Jacob Hammer asserts that the Roman "expected a beautiful woman to have a tiny nose, beautiful legs, a well-developed tapering hand, with long tapering fingers, and golden or auburn hair" (18). Even aspects such as the color of the eyes and skin were imperative for a Roman woman to be considered beautiful. Women needed to have "eyes like flaming torches—oculi flagrantes: to have a smooth neck with the hair flowing over it: and to have fair skin" (19). Proportion and symmetry were essential pillars in the construction of beauty in the Roman Empire since these two notions implied that bodies would follow the laws of nature and perfection. Monstrous anatomies, on the other hand, were bodies that did not respect these standards. If the female bodies lacked parts or presented an excess of any sort that could disrupt natural symmetry and did not meet the beauty standards and women were rejected.

Although the play takes place in Rome, Shakespeare's historical context is also relevant to understand some aspects behind the portrayals of the main female characters: Lavinia and Tamora. As mentioned before, men in the ancient world excluded women from social and political spaces and enforced ideals of beauty on the female body. The Early Modern period also followed some of these notions since the Renaissance promoted many of the ideals of arts and aesthetics from Greece and Rome. For example, Early Modern England

had female rulers but even then; women were not exempted from discrimination and absurd notions of morality and beauty. Rights and responsibilities were given based on gender and socio-economic status. Apart from being excluded from public spaces and politics, with a few exceptions, women were also punished for their physical appearance and background. During the Renaissance, physical beauty was used to determine women's morals and kindness; thus, being beautiful became necessary for women in order to avoid public scorn.

According to George Duby and Michelle Perrot in *Historia de las Mujeres: 3. Del Renacimiento a la Edad Media* (1992), ugliness was associated to the lower classes and immorality. Duby and Perrot affirm that for the Renaissance, female beauty was characterized by fair skin, red cheeks, black eyebrows, long neck and hands, small feet, ¨graceful¨ hips, firm breasts and pink nipples (89-90). So, the female body was rated based on those ideals of beauty, and this view resulted in unjust treatments towards women who did not have these traits. Women considered "ugly" became pariahs who lived on the margins, especially if they were not wealthy. Duby and Perrot assert that the first victims of the new order of morality were women since misogynistic theologists and the sexually frustrated clergy denounced them as the daughters of sinful Eve. As a result of these views, women were proclaimed sinful, manipulative, and evil. These views also incited a train of thought where women would ensnare naïve men and deliver them to Satan, a view that was also supported by the "medical sciences" which affirmed that women had a biological need to satisfy their erotic desires and fill the space in their wombs (Duby and Perrot 98). Taking this into consideration, it is not surprising that female representation in literature reinforced the image of women as either passively angelical or monstrously evil. In *Titus Andronicus*, these opposing representations are portrayed through Lavinia, the noble maiden, and Tamora, the monstrous Other.

1.2.3 Gender and the Role of Women in Society

In order to discuss the role of gender in society, it is essential to explore how power relations affect women's position and how these relations attempt to subdue women and categorize them as inferior. To do this, Foucault's theories will help demonstrate how power and knowledge are systematically deprived to women as a way to police and control them. Additionally, Foucault's theory on the body and sexuality will also help examine how the female body serves as a battleground where male power is exercised and where female identity is built and controlled by patriarchal mechanisms.

Foucault believes that "the production of knowledge is always bound up with historically specific regimes of power and, therefore, every society produces its own truths which have a normalizing and regulatory function" (qtd. in McNay 25). This means that every society determines what the truth is and will use that "truth" to justify the control and punishments exercised on individuals who do not adhere to the truth. By justifying punishments against dissidents, society allows institutions to subdue and police behaviors and bodies. Following Foucault's view of the body as the principal instrument and effect of modern disciplinary power, it is no wonder that female bodies and sexuality are constantly oppressed and punished by patriarchal societies that fear females' "deviant" nature and the power that women can exercise with and through their bodies. Examples of forms of oppression on the female body are the taboos around female pleasure, the chastising of sexuality in women, and the hysterization of the female body. Naturally, with repression there is also resistance, and this resistance becomes a part of the intricate power relations that, in this case, are inscribed on the sexed bodies. These sexed bodies constitute the main target of

disciplinary powers, but they also stand for a form of resistance that aims at disrupting power structures such as patriarchy.

Foucault's theory about power analyses how the relation between power-knowledge-truth affects the body and inscribes its mechanisms on individuals. Lois McNay in *Foucault & Feminism* (1993) agrees that the body bears the scars and marks of the mechanisms that societies use to control individuals, while Foucault asserts that: "The body is the surface of events (traced by language and dissolved by ideas), the locus of a dissociated self (adopting the illusion of a substantial unity), and a volume in perpetual disintegration" (qtd. in McNay 83) that is imprinted by history and its processes. Consequently, the body is understood as a historical and cultural entity in which power exercises punishments. McNay argues that the notion that women are inferior is naturalized and legitimized by biology. This assertion is achieved "through a twofold movement in which, firstly, women's bodies are marked as inferior by being compared with men's bodies, according to male standards (home manqué) and, secondly, biological functions are conflated with social characteristics" (17). The characteristics in question relate masculine traits to dominant and strong perceptions where men were considered more able and worthy than women, both physically and rationally.

Since men were considered superior, women were considered inferior and weaker. In de Beauvoir's words "when a woman is given over to man as his property, he demands that she represents the flesh purely for its own sake. Her body is not perceived as the radiation of a subjective personality, but as a thing sunk in its own immanence" (189). This derogation of the female body serves as a justification for its submission against the masculine. As a result, patriarchy seeks to undermine, police, shape, and oppress female body/sexuality through different entities and frameworks. Gerda Lerner in her books *Women and History* (1986) and *The Creation of Feminist Consciousness: From the Middle Ages to Eighteen-*

Seventy (1993)tackles the birth of patriarchy and how patriarchal concepts, built into mental constructs, are concealed in such a way that individuals hardly perceive these mechanisms and even perpetuate them until this day. The critic also states that patriarchy originated as the dominant form of societal order which gradually institutionalized a series of benefits and rights for men while excluding and punishing women. According to Lerner, once this system was established: "patriarchy transformed sexual, social, economic relations and dominated all systems of ideas. In the course of the establishment of patriarchy and constantly reinforced as the result of it, the major idea systems which explain and order Western civilization incorporated a set of unstated assumptions about gender" (3).

These assumptions were accurately summarized by Lerner as follows. The first assumption states that men and women are different creatures based on their biology, needs, capacities, functions, and their divine creation. The second one affirms that men are " 'naturally' superior, stronger and more rational, therefore designed to be dominant" (4), while women represented the opposite, thus justifying their inability to perform most tasks. As a consequence, "the subordination of women is assumed as a given, likened to a natural condition" (Lerner 6). The third assumption is that men are "engaged in 'trascendent' activities, women—like lower class people of both sexes—are engaged in 'immanent' activities" (3). The fourth assumption is based on the notion that men have a natural right to control the rights and sexuality of women since the latter are incapable of doing it themselves. The fifth and last assumption concludes that men are able to "mediate between humans and God. Women reach God through the mediation of men" (3). Unfortunately, these biased, unproven, and absurd ideas have permeated and reinforced patriarchal societies; and these assumptions have been incorporated to some extent into the laws of each society.

Thus, the birth of patriarchy gave way to a lifetime of submission for women as a result of absurd notions of differences between sexes that categorized women as inferior and gave men the right to police women's lives and bodies in order to "protect" them from their weak, evil and sinful nature. Based on these ideas, it is only natural that women were excluded from social and political stages and pushed into the household in order to silence and control them. However, women were provided with the responsibility of giving life to future citizens/warriors and wives/mothers for society.

In addition, the presence of women as objects in the public and private domains shows not only the submission of the feminine, but it also propitiates its rebellion. Therefore, women were tied to and by a social order that not only restricted their identities but also their places in society, thus, alienating and neutralizing them in the private sphere. In literature, for example, women are categorized into a segregating bipolarity in which they are represented as either an aid for the hero or an obstacle. In both cases, they lack the necessary strength to oppose the male figures of authority; consequently, women are considered as either weak, crazy or evil, based on previous notions of male power, madness and monstrosity. In sum, when they defy the social roles that control the *status quo,* womenare guilty of transgression since they rebel against their place in society. In those cases women are considered evil and monstrous.

In Western culture, the categories of gender have structured social life since the ancient world up to today's world. Such division allowed for privileges and rights to be given, based on a person's physiology while identity was built through interiorized processes. These processes separate subjects from others, and define them by what others attribute to them. For example, female stereotypes and female monstrosity are a result of how society creates and frames women in order to control them. Moreover, women are often portrayed as binary

opposite pairs; they are either angelic-like characters or evil ones in need of redemption. Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar assert that "there are two moral extremes, the angel and the monster, that is why there are two different symbols, the subversive and the symbols of female transcendence" (19). The polarization of female representations into demon and angel[13] reflects male dread and anxieties towards the feminine. The angel-monster dichotomy oversimplifies female characters and constrains the feminine into specific spaces where they are forced to carry out their social roles within the private sphere. On the one hand, the angel[14] embodies a woman who possesses the "eternal feminine" that requires "virtues of modesty, gracefulness, purity, delicacy, civility, compliancy, reticence, chastity, affability, politeness" (Gilbert and Gubar 23). She is the angelical woman who delights and serves men through her modesty and unselfish desire to please and provide. This "lady" illustrates the beauty and fragility of a being who tends to others with a sense of responsibility only to be rewarded with death "for to be selfless is not only to be noble, it is to be dead" (25). Thus, death glorifies the dutifulness of a lady; it idealizes the loving acts of a mother/wife/sister who does not fear death as long as her loved ones have been properly taken care of while she was alive and even in her deathbed[15].

On the other hand, the female monster antagonizes the lady-like behavior by rejecting social norms and uncovering men's ambivalent feelings about their inability to control their physical existence, their emotions, their birth, and their death as well as their inability to control the women around them. The ambivalence of the angel-monster dichotomy reflects male dread towards the female power of creation and the possibility of rebellion. Fear

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[13]To reinforce the idea of female polarization, there are also the archetypes of the Good Mother and the Terrible Mother.

[14]See John Miller's "The Angel in the House".

[15]To expand these ideas see Gilbert and Gubar's*The Madwoman in the Attic* (p.25)

towards the feminine results in an objectification and vilification of women where social disobedience to gender norms disrupts hegemonic discourses and confronts gender inequality. Consequently, the male dread of the female leads to punishments and marginalization. Then, intransigent female authority is punished by impeaching female characters into monster-women who are referred to as witches, bitches, fiends and monsters. This aspect is due to women's "unfeminine" behavior that transgresses the private and public spheres. As a consequence, women are confined to predictable and monotonous roles in literary texts. They are either an aid for the hero or an obstacle to be overcome. Thus, hegemonic notions of femininity within patriarchal discourses restrain female behaviors and punish the rebellion of the feminine as can be observed in some Early Modern tragedies.

The difficult endeavor of constructing and maintaining gender norms and identities creates social and cultural punishments. Social institutions have confined women to roles and spaces that mold their identities while, at the same time, depicting them as evil, sinful, and monstrous through social and literary representations in medical pamphlets as well as in literary, religious, and educational texts. Men expect women to remain pure and virginal, yet, patriarchal societies identify them as objects of pleasure that appertain to the male collective. John Cohen contends that categories and roles become a tool to control women in view of how "these borders are in place to control the traffic in women, or more generally to establish strictly homosocial bonds, the ties between men that keep a patriarchal society functional" (13). Ever since the biblical Eve, women have been defined and forced into submission by male authorities. Therefore, as a social institution, even the Church, through the use of biblical statements, attempts to control women and their actions within society:

> Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet. For Adam was

> formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. Yet she will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control. (Timothy 2:11-15)

As mothers, women's bodies change through pregnancy and childbirth, thus, in the views of patriarchy, their bodies became grotesque and disfigured while in their virginity they resembled the holy mother of God. So, the female body, once it surrenders the "close" condition of virginity, "constitutes a dangerous kind of opening otherwise impermeable edifice of patriarchal power and property-holding, a conduit of pollution, debasement, and usurpation that requires constant regulation" (Neil 407). Thus, the female body represents an unknown space where men project their anxiety towards it and its differences in contrast to the male anatomy.

The female anatomy is then linked to negative connotations that support stereotypical notions of the female as lustful, evil, and dangerous. Therefore, maternity as a natural phenomenon does not procure any power; instead, it is used against women as a form of control and atonement. For Pierre Bordieu in *Masculine Domination* (2002), biology has produced effects on the sexed bodies and minds, resulting in a collective socializing work that creates and supports an arbitrary division of the sexes. These divisions thrive on masculine domination while females are symbolically subdued daily through naturalized practices of domination which are not perceived as such since they are veiled and women do not identify them. These forms of domination are developed by ideological schemes permeated by culture, religion, and biology. They support the idea that women are inferior and in need of guidance/punishment in order to overcome their own lacks and failures.

In *The Second Sex* (1949) Simone de Beauvoir affirms that "If woman wishes to overcome the original stain in herself, her only alternative is to bow before God, whose will

subordinates her to man. And by this submission she can assume a new role in masculine mythology" (225-226). In addition, by becoming mothers, women attempt to atone for their sins; however, their ability to give birth has puzzled and scared men for centuries: " and specifically the infantile dread of maternal autonomy, has historically objectified itself in vilification of women" (Gilbert &Gubar 34). So, the fecund body becomes monstrous which is the abject mother that creates ambivalent feelings of pleasure and rejection. Then, jouissance[16] lives within the abject, and the subject keeps returning to the abject in spite of the feelings of disgust and fear: "The abject confronts us . . . with our earliest attempts to release the hold of maternal entity . . . It is a violent, clumsy breaking away, with the constant risk of falling back under the sway of a power as securing as it is stifling" (Kristeva 13). Therefore, the abject female body must be covered, hidden, and disguised by traditional modes of femininity. In sum, the role of motherhood has been portrayed in terms of the prejudices (social, aesthetic, mythological) and her pre-conceived erroneous notions of men towards the female body.

In addition, the male collective has depicted motherhood in terms of extremes that represent a patriarchal society's anxiety towards the female body and the power of creation. According to patriarchal views, a good mother protects and cares for her children and should accept their deaths with dignity and silence. A good mother must possess the "eternal feminine" and adhere to the *status quo*. A bad mother harms her children or engages in violent acts either against them or to protect them. For every positive image of women, there is an equally negative female portrayal that embodies the fears and anxiety of men. For example,

[16]For further reference see Jaques Lacan's seminar "The Object of Psychoanalysis 1965-1966" , 8 June 1966 (XXI).

Dympha Callaghan's *Shakespeare Without Women* (2000) summarizes how women were persecuted as mothers: as bad mothers for witchcraft, and as bad mothers for infanticide. Stephanie Chamberlain in her article "Fantasizing Infanticide: Lady Macbeth and the Murdering Mother in Early Modern England" also refers to monstrous motherhood when she affirms that mothers could undermine patriarchal outcomes, a cultural anxiety about women's transmission in patrilineage. In fact, patrilineage could be altered through marital infidelity, nursing, and infanticide, that is, activities that rendered maternal agency a social and political concern (73). Thus, women are framed into opposing views by means of their physiognomy, their ability to transgress social norms and to disrupt the hegemonic patriarchal discourse.

1.2.4 Monsters in Society and their Portrayals

Culture plays an essential role in the construction of monstrosity. This can be observed with the gendering of the term "female monstrosity" which deems some women's looks and actions as negative and transgressive due to patriarchal ideologies that judge certain female appearance and behavior negatively but praise similar masculine traits and acts. In literature the first mention of female monstrosity in the Western world comes from Hesiod, the Greek writer. In his work *Theogony*, Hesiod mentions Gaia, a goddess that presents an ambivalent nature between nurturing mother and destructor of life. As mother nature, Gaia is the source of life in the Cosmos but from her body monsters also arise. She is described as enormous, powerful, imminent, terrible, and monstrous. Here, the feminine principle is understood as monstrous in its physicality and behavioral aspects since Gaia gives birth to monsters and even plots with her sons to castrate Uranus, her husband. Thus, with this

example, one sees how female monstrosity in literature has been present from the beginnings of the Western civilization. In addition, the relationship between the feminine and the monstrous creates some symbolic violence that is interwoven by the patriarchal culture notions around women. In other words, by relating women to negative aspects of destruction and chaos, society has been able to justify the use, control, misuse, and punishment of women under the guise of protecting society from the female potential for monstrosity, chaos, and death.

Monsters have terrorized and awed cultures across time and space while each society has tried to either destroy or control them. The term "monster" comes from the Latin term *monstrum* which refers to an omen, a sign, or a warning. The word "monster" derives from the verb *monĕō, -ẽre, ũī, ĭtum*, whose meaning is to teach and to show (Álvarez 3). A monster "shows" its deformity through its appearance and behavior, resulting in an omen of crisis. Its physical and behavioral characteristics suggest disorder and chaos in a society that values order and symmetry. In fact, Ancient Greece centered its anxiety on monstrosity based on physical appearance, until monstrosity gradually shifted to include behavioral aspects as indicators.

In Ancient Greece, unknown creatures embodied society's fear of chaos, irrationality, the power of nature and even the "little-understood nature of the female in contrast to the male" (Felton 103). In his work entitled *Reproducción de los Animales,* Aristotle attempted to categorize monsters, and he asserts that monstrosity consists of a lack or excess of characteristics that go against nature, more specifically, against the rules of nature (770b10). For Aristotle, the division of sexes is a monstrous deviation; the birth of a female is the birth of a monster because these creatures, women, are conceived as a form of mutilation (769b

29-31). In sum, women represent the threat of the monstrous, an inversion of the so-called "natural order" which is why the Greeks usually identified women with chaos.

Ancient civilizations attempted to study the birth of monsters and the purpose of their existence as either examples of social chaos or as obstacles for heroes in literary works. The Greek channeled many of their fears into their monsters; however, they used reason to depict fear in a secular way by inventing stories about monstrous races of the Far East, in places such as India. Herodotus, for example, wrote the oldest record about India, a land believed to be inhabited by monsters. Ctesias also wrote in his *History of Persia* a series of fantastic stories about Orient and how God "populated India with the pygmies, who fight with the cranes; with the sciapodes, a people with a single large foot on which they move with great speed and which they also use as a sort of umbrella against the burning sun" (qtd. in Wittkower 160). The critic adds that "fabulous animals [like] the martikhora with a man's face, the body of a lion and the tail of a scorpion, the unicorn and the griffins which guard the gold" (160-161) were also part of that distant land.

Monstrosity is associated to elements of chaos and excess in opposition to order and symmetry; thus, such characterizations of monsters should be applied to the physical and moral planes (Álvarez 33). Álvarez states that in the Roman tradition, Plinius the Elder contributed to the research on monstrosity with his book *Historia Naturalis* (74) where he associates monstrosity to excess and enormity, and he categorizes monsters according to their participation in Greek myths found in Homer's and Hesiod's texts. According to Álvarez, in Medieval times, classical ideas from Plinius, Macrobio, and Aristotle became influential in regards to concepts of monstrosity and beasts. On his part, Mircea Eliade, in his studies of the ancient world and ancient mythologies, asserts that monstrosity represents a system of constructs in which notions and ideologies of each culture and time meet; each culture

determines what is “right” and what is “normal,” and under these definitions members of a society are categorized and governed (136). Thus, society constructs the very notion of the monster, making it dependent on each culture’s ideology, beliefs, and standards.

In addition, the construction of the monster is permeated by the context of each society, and this can be exemplified through the intrusion of religion, specially with the Christian religion. For example, as a result of Christian intrusion in the Medieval era, the female body became a symbol of sin, shame, and monstrosity; women were no longer creators, they became demons whose bodies required male supervision in order to maintain their “divine” power to conceive. Barbara Creed asserts that women have historically been “constructed as ‘biological freaks’ whose bodies represent a fearful and threatening form of sexuality¨ (6). These notions have been supported by famous thinkers such as Aristotle who believed, as seen before, that women were monsters since birth. The Greek philosopher stated that a woman “is literally a monster: a failed and botched male who is only born female due to an excess of moisture and of coldness during the process of conception” (qtd. in Creed 1). Women are then defined in opposition to men by socially constructed masculine views and parameters, and any deviation from the norm renders women as threats in need of containment.

The Greek began associating monstrosity to deformity, physical transgressions and evil. With the passing of time, people related monstrosity to moral and psychological aspects; society could judge a person as monstrous based on behavior and/or transgression of the norms. The monstrous was often linked to grotesque images that produced feelings of disgust and repulsion. However, the grotesque was not always perceived entirely as negative. For example, Bahktin analyses the perceptions of the grotesque body in popular culture during the Medieval era. This popular culture consisted of artistic productions which emphasized

comic cultural elements such as carnivalesque images, comic verbal compositions, and subversive characters. Thus, such elements were used to understand the dual symbolism on many concepts and images as is the case of the grotesque. In *Rabelais in his World* (1968), Bahktin asserts that the grotesque body includes forms of excess in size, number of extremities, type of clothing and proficiency in a language that opposes hierarchies and pristine ideals (306). Nonetheless, grotesque images invite a form of rejection and laughter that depicts the ideals of their context. The body and bodily life have here a cosmic and, at the same time, a universal character. It is pertinent to point out that this is not the body and the corporeal physiology in the modern sense of these words since the body is not individualized. So, the material bodily principle is contained not in the biological individual or in the bourgeois ego, but in people who are continually growing and becoming renewed (Bahktin 19). Therefore, the constant growth, change, renewal, and transformation of the body constitute an example of both the grotesque and of a positive renewal. In addition, the open and grotesque body carries negative and positive connotations that depict the ambivalence placed on the human body and its transformations. From this perspective, the female body has a special place in comic culture since women and their ability to conceive are closely linked to the duality of life and death.

In *Rabelais in his World,*Bahktin presents the female body as a positive element within popular comic culture[17]. For Bahktin, women constitute a source of growth and rebirth that stand for the everlasting transformations of the world and the cycles of life. The female body is a powerful representation of the world and the creation of life; unlike Western

[17]Comic culture was born as a way to oppose traditional official culture. It consists of elements such as ritual forms of spectacles (carnevalesque celebrations, comic verbal plays, parodies), familiar and grotesque vocabulary (cursing, insults, popular sayings), and the constant presence of laughter.

cultures in which the monstrous body is exclusively negative and a symbol of chaos. However, popular comic culture in the Medieval period is not hostile towards women; it does no present women as evil beings. According to Bahktin, female corporeality connects women to the inferior body that is linked to death and rebirth. Therefore, the capacity of the female body to conceive is perceived as positive and as part of its ambivalence.

During the twentieth century, critics argued that monstrosity consisted of a polymorphous entity that included physical, moral, and psychological traits considered monstrous in the Western culture. For these critics, the monster "embodies the existential threat to social life, the chaos, atavism, and negativism that symbolize destructiveness and all other obstacles to order and progress" (Felton 105-106). Monsters also represent a risk of social disorder and chaos. As harbingers of crisis, monsters do not participate in the "order of things," and their bodies resist attempts to be included in the systematic structure (Cohen 5). Joseph Campbell agrees with Jeffrey Cohen when he states that the monster is "some horrendous presence or apparition that explodes all your standards for harmony, order and ethical conduct . . ." (99), disrupting social norms. In fact, monsters become scapegoats[18] in which society projects its own mistakes and anxieties. Then, the scapegoat is demonized and turned into a monster that must be slain to preserve order and avoid chaos in the community.

In addition, monsters challenge binary thinking, for their alterity is inscribed across cultural, political, racial, economic, psychological, and sexual behaviors. Richard Kearney in *Strangers, Gods and Monsters* (2013), asserts that: "Where real monsters were neither proficient nor sufficient, imaginary ones were invented . . . [since] human imagination has a propensity to create hybrid perversions of nature" (115). For Kearney, monsters confront the

[18]The role of the scapegoat is that of being "invested with the internal malice of the community and then expelled into the wilderness, eradicating all peril of contagion"(Kearney 28).

individual with the reality of human condition since "if our goals are celestials, our origins are terrestrial" (4). Therefore, some groups blame individuals who disregard their roles and threaten social norms. These individuals are seen as monstrous beings who become a threat. They carry the evils of society until they are executed or exiled by that same society. Women are seen as examples of these beings, since their differences in contrast to men's historically were interpreted as a threat.

Peter Stallybrass, in *Patriarchal Territories: The Body Enclosed*, elucidates on the notions of the female body as being "naturally grotesque," for such notions resulted in the male effort to control the female body. Women's open bodies transformed into closed spaces during pregnancy, a state where the womb represents the ultimate closed space that is open through birth, a grotesque act that opens the body to create life and transforms women's body yet again. In addition, within the juxtaposition of life and death, corpses force the subject to acknowledge his/her own mortality, creating feelings of anxiety, rejection, and disgust. Actions such as murder, war, and sacrifices confront the subject with the possibility of death, and the subject also confronts the abject.

Kearney defines abjection as: "an experience of the 'abominable real' prior to any sense of identifiable ego or object. As such it signals that borderline experience of something monstrously disturbing which fills us with both repulsion and attraction" (89). In *The Powers of Horror* (1998) Julia Kristeva analyzes the abject and its relation to the subject. Abjection can be understood as a human reaction to a possible breakdown in meaning by a loss of distinction between the subject and the object. The abject is "what disturbs identity, system, order. What does not respect borders, positions, rules" (Kristeva 4). The abject brings forth

the Real[19] into the subject's existence as can be exemplified through the presence of a corpse which confronts the viewer with his-her own mortality. Consequently, the abject is part of the monstrous since the monster does not respect boundaries or distinctions. In fact, the monster allows for chaos and repulsion while also creates a sense of awe on its beholders; for the monster makes others see their own nature and flaws. So, in the light of Kristeva's theories, grotesque and transgressive images evoke feelings of abjection that are linked to notions of monstrosity.

During the twentieth century, other studies about monstrosity in terms of social and sexual behaviors as Michael Foucault's theory about the monster and the abnormal subject began to appear. As such, the concept of monster has shifted throughout time depending on the context. Umberto Eco, for example, provides a modern view on monstrosity in *The History of Ugliness* (2010). His work traces various definitions of ugliness in opposition to beauty, a term that has been usually defined by many artists and philosophers. Eco, as well as Foucault, Cohen, Kearney, and Kristeva, believes that notions of beauty and ugliness/monstrosity depend on social and political constructs. Consequently, the relationship between the abnormal and the monstrous, the acceptable and the horrible can be inverted based on the optic from which a person observes the object/person/creature (12). As the saying goes: "Beauty is in the eye of the beholder," one can add that monstrosity is too.

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[19]Jaques Lacan's theory of the Imaginary, the Symbolic and the Real: "The register of the Real is tricky to encapsulate and evades being pinned down through succinct definitions. Lacan's numerous and shifting pronouncements apropos the Real are themselves partly responsible for this absence of straightforwardness. But, rather than being just a barrier to grasping the Real, this absence is itself revelatory of this register. To be more precise, as that which is foreign to Imaginary-Symbolic reality—this reality is the realm containing conscious apprehension, communicable significance, and the like—the Real is intrinsically elusive, resisting by nature captured in the comprehensibly meaningful formulations of concatenations of Imaginary-Symbolic signs. It is, as Lacan stresses again and again, an 'impossibility' *vis-à-vis* reality." *(Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy)*

Therefore, from Ancient Greece to the Early Modern Period and even in contemporary times, the terms monstrous/monstrosity have demonstrated their fluidity and polymorphous ability to transform and survive across different societies, cultures, and epochs.

As has been exposed, this first chapter introduces the contexts of the historical periods of the play and author, needed for a New Historicist approach. It also introduces the theories that will contribute to the analysis of William Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* in order to explore the portrayal of female characters as monstrous. Since feminist re-readings of female characters have helped to focus on the reasons behind the construction of women and their complexity as human beings, critical premises on gender, popular culture, power relations, aesthetics, as well as theories about monstrosity, the grotesque, and the abject have contributed to envision new interpretations of female appearance and behaviors in the light of historical contexts and premises that deeply affected Shakespeare and consequently his texts. The second, third, and fourth chapters will analyze the female characters and their context based on the struggles that each woman faced, leading them into a journey towards either power and revenge, or suffering and victimization. As a counterpoint strategy to reinforce the female exploitation, analyses of male characters will be presented to expand views on gender differences. In fact, the following chapter will analyze monstrous female anatomies along with male anatomies to determine characteristics that are considered monstrous based on Roman ideals of morality and aesthetics and the validity of such views as well.

Chapter II: Monstrous Anatomies in *Titus Andronicus*

Disfigured bodies, bloody revenges, and monstrous acts pervade *Titus Andronicus* through the depiction of characters that transgress ideals of beauty and order, and violate moral and ethical codes. This chapter will compare monstrous male anatomies to female anatomies to show the differences within their portrayals as well as Roman anxieties about order and morality. Bodily traits of the monstrous and the grotesque affect the way in which the characters are treated, and it ultimately dictates their fate towards the end of the tragedy. The different degrees of monstrosity as inscribed in the body of several characters, determine the extent to which characters will seek revenge. For the present analysis, these characters will be categorized into two gender groups, that is, masculine and feminine, in order to reveal the different perceptions based on their sex as well as the anatomical differences of their monstrous traits. The four sections of the chapter are: an introductory section that presents a contextualization of the text, a second section devoted to monstrosity in terms of gender, a third section developed by the different degrees of monstrosity and a section of final remarks.

To understand the degrees of monstrosity, it is necessary to study the anxieties in the Roman and Early Modern contexts that affect Shakespeare's depictions of characters. William Shakespeare chose the Roman context for the setting of his play as a homage to his predecessors and as an example of the influence of the classical world during the Renaissance. The presence of the Early Modern period makes itself evident through characters who are in a constant struggle for power and who exhibit a desire to either disrupt or maintain order. A good source of historical reference for the proposed analysis is Greenblatt's *Will in the World* (2004) that studies Shakespeare's life and the influence of his historical context in depth. For example, Greenblatt affirms that morality plays were essential

for Shakespeare, and so his plays created "the expectation that drama worth seeing would get at something central to human destiny" (33). This notion can be found in *Titus Andronicus* where the audience sees how the "evil queen" draws slowly near to her end as she moves forward with her revenge against the "tormented hero." The audience also realizes how the evildoers are punished and killed at the end of the play to restore order and stability to Rome. But let us explore the context and text in more detail.

2.1 Introductory Section: Key Aspects about Context and Text

William Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* presents the audience with a text where several groups interact and clash with each other in a struggle for power and recognition. One group consists of the Romans, the hegemonic group that reigns over the rest and that holds the power of the Empire. The second group consists of the barbarians, war captives who are forced into submission by the Romans. The third group consists of the men of the play who represent the patriarchal hegemonic system which allows them to use and mistreat women through various violent actions. The last group consists of women who suffer different forms of violence as a result of their gender and are forced into submission by the patriarchal hegemony. Within this classification the strongest group consists of male Roman characters who, throughout the play, will struggle to maintain their sovereignty by murdering, torturing, and punishing those who oppose them. The struggle among these forces will fuel the play in terms of oppression, challenge, and resistance.

In *Titus Andronicus,* Shakespeare portrays Roman ideals of morality and the struggle between good and evil through his characters and their conflicts. Since the morality plays helped Shakespeare "to understand how to focus theatrical attention on his character's

psychological, moral, and spiritual life, as well as on their outward behavior" (Greenblatt 2004:33), the Bard designed character traits that would reveal said inner life. Therefore, Shakespeare's encounters with morality plays and the Catholic influence on Early Modern England fashioned his writings and the creation of his characters as innocent, sinful or devilish beings permeated by Catholic thought. Consequently, the unraveling of the play where evil and monsters are eradicated to give way to a new rebirth for Rome, portrays both Roman and Early Modern notions of the moral struggle between good and evil.

The Bard's intention of putting these characters on stage reflects how his society judged the Other. In this case, the Goths and the Moor represent Otherness, which is why animalistic imagery is often used in the portrayal of these characters to show how their enemies perceive them as something less than human, for the Romans compare their enemies to animals. Additionally, Shakespeare uses Titus and his progeny to exemplify the power of morality and the threat of degradation through unethical actions. Both the Early Modern period and the Roman Empire value morality and strength dearly. These two elements are initially portrayed by Titus and his family. Thus, the Andronici are venerated as the ideal citizens who uphold the law, aid the Empire, and follow moral rules. The Andronici men constitute the hegemonic group that is respected and obeyed by others, due to their social position and status in Rome. However, after facing the influence of the Goths and their lawfulness, the Andronici are marginalized and punished for their violent rituals at the hands of the very "barbarians" they sought to kill.

By exposing the inefficiency of the Roman law, Shakespeare denounces the fragility of a system that fails to protect its citizens and encourages revenge. Just as in the Roman Empire, citizens in the Early Modern period expected plays to exhibit lawful and courageous individuals who took revenge on those who wronged them. Nonetheless, *Titus*

*Andronicus*introduces the "villains" of the play as the victims of Roman rituals that demand the death of Tamora's eldest son, for example. Shakespeare shows how the law was used to encourage vengeance, for the Early Modern viewers expected to find plots precisely related to revenge on the Elizabethan stage. By portraying revenge as a form of retribution that leads its perpetrators to their deaths, Shakespeare denounces a system that allows senseless violence rather than encouraging civilized resolutions. Thus, Titus loses most of his family, his reputation, and his life as a result of his thirst for revenge that started with the ritualistic murder of Alarbus. Tamora dies because of her transgressive behavior and plotting against the Romans. Lavinia is also killed due to the loss of her worth after having been raped and mutilated. In sum, Shakespeare uses the stage to denounce the encoded violence hidden in a system that allows for revenge and sacrifice despite of being part of a so-called "civilized society." Driving forces in *Titus Andronicus* are used to determine the fate of several characters, especially those who are part of an oppressed group, thus, social forces help further the plot and justify injustice.

Religion constitutes a driving force in *Titus Andronicus* since Titus and his family use religion to justify the sacrificial murder of Alarbus, Tamora's eldest son. According to the Romans, religion dictates that the proudest warrior of their enemies must die to appease the spirits of the death. At this point, all the Romans agree that they must honor religion and murder Alarbus despite Tamora's pleas for his life. Religion is then used to justify violence and emphasize Roman power over the Goths' impotence in a new land. The Goths find themselves helpless in the face of this new religion that tells them that their position as enemies turns them into a prey for the conquerors. Even if Alarbus fought valiantly against his enemies, his courage is unfairly repaid with his murder. However, the Goths do not acquiesce to the Roman power at any point, instead, they plot to retaliate against their captors

and avenge Alarbus. The Goths despise the Roman rituals that appear barbarian, even to them. Tamora fittingly refers to Roman religion as "irreligious piety" after witnessing such a barbaric notion of sacrifice for death. Ironically, the Goths who are judged as the barbaric Other, are in fact more civilized than the blood-craving Romans who refuse to heed to the pleas of a begging mother. Thus, Titus justifies the need to sacrifice Alarbus by emphasizing precisely their religious duty:

> TITUS: Religiously they ask a sacrifice.
>
> To this your son is marked; and die he must,
>
> To appease their groaning shadows that are gone (1.1.127-129).[20]

Religion, then, becomes the first social force that oppresses the Goths once they enter Rome. Because of this, Tamora and her children have no choice but to accept the death of Alarbus. Nonetheless, they accept the sovereignty of this force momentarily, for they will avenge their family as a justification and retribution against the Andronici and Rome.

Honor constitutes an important social value that intertwines with religion in order to constrict the oppressed and justify the oppressors. Titus and his sons kill Alarbus for honor, and Titus claims that he kills his own son, Mutius, because he dishonored him by disobeying his command. Titus also kills Tamora and her progeny to avenge his children and recover his honor as well. Similarly, Tamora and her children seek revenge against the Andronici to honor Alarbus and assert their own power in the face of their enemies. As a result, in *Titus Andronicus* most characters engage in violent schemes that result in bloodshed and deformity in order to avenge others or even themselves in the name of honor.

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[20] The following quotations taken from this source will be identified by indicating within parenthesis the act, the scene, and the lines from the Shakesperean text *Titus Andronicus.*

Unfortunately for the Goths, the code of honor appears to be exclusive to male Romans since outsiders are not deemed as worthy of honor. Consequently, honor is reserved for the Romans, thus, denying the oppressed group from any opportunity of asserting their subject position as worthy or grievable. As a consequence, Tamora and her children are not allowed to look for justice; instead, they are expected to accept their fate and behave submissively towards their conquerors. Honor in Rome must prevail and Titus uses it to his advantage, as can be seen in the scene where he stabs his own son. After committing this crime, Titus' progeny identify their father's actions as cruel and unfair. Nevertheless, Titus justifies his actions by re-asserting his authority as the patriarch of the family. Such power will be detrimental for women in the play; Lavinia's case is a perfect example. Thus, in Titus' actions, honor is twisted and deranged, as he continues to disguise his violent nature behind the cover of honor and morality as his ethical compass.

As seen, Roman anxieties about order and morality permeate actions which further the plot into bloody deeds in Shakespeare's play. Female characters are used as examples for morality and amorality based on their status as either Roman born or barbaric others, as dictated by a patriarchal and xenophobic society. Then, women in the play are constantly used as means of executing revenge and maintaining honor and power. Their position as the oppressed group facilitates male abuse and leads women to their inescapable demise at the hands of the patriarchal hegemony. For example, Lavinia unlike Tamora, is Roman-born. This means that she has some authority; however, Roman men subjugate this authority. Although Lavinia can speak at the beginning of the play, her words are void of meaning since the only law that prevails is that of her father and the Emperor. As Cantarella explains: "Endowed with a smaller and imperfect reason, incapable of controlling her 'lustful' side, the woman, who has no will, must be controlled by either the husband or the state" (60). As

a result, Lavinia is unable to decide to whom she marries, and instead, she is willing to obey her father's command instead of defending her feelings.

Additionally, Lavinia is raped and the physical silence imposed on her by cutting her tongue speaks about the perception of the female body as being objectified and fragmented. Cantarella agrees with Moses Finley when he states that during the Roman Empire "it is as if the Romans wished to suggest that women were not, and ought not be genuine individuals, but only fractions of a family. Anonymous and passive . . ." (qtd. in Cantarella 126). Both the Early Modern period and the Roman Empire struggle for control over female sexuality and female corporeality. The female body becomes a site for patriarchy to inscribe its powers, an action clearly depicted in Lavinia, who is symbolically and physically silenced as a part of a plot of revenge against her father. Even though Lavinia had no part in the murder of Alarbus, she is nonetheless victimized to hurt Titus Andronicus.

Patriarchy gives power to males to control females; thus, women in the play are constantly abused and objectified by the men around them. Chiron and Demetrius, Tamora's sons, use Lavinia to satisfy their lust and to taint Titus' pride. Despite being part of an oppressed group, Tamora's children are able to abuse Lavinia using their power as men. Lavinia's suffering is not meant exclusively hers, but it extends to her family since her rape deems her as a monstrous source of shame. To cleanse his shame, Titus resolves to kill his daughter and thus, to bury his failures. In fact, imagery of fathers killing their daughters to protect their pride is not unusual for Romans, as Cantarella affirms.

While Lavinia spends most of the tragedy as a victim, Tamora chooses to rebel and punish her enemies. Cornila affirms that Tamora "also represents the woman who was never under the oppression of the patriarchy in her life until she was brought to Rome and the Emperor Saturninus took her as his wife" (18). Tamora, unlike Lavinia, is not scared of using

her sexuality to obtain what she wants, but she is nonetheless killed and branded as a monster by the Andronici. Tamora refuses her subject position as the oppressed; rather, she chooses to rebel and seek power to punish those who wronged her and her family. The Queen of the Goths is even willing to marry the Roman Emperor in order to subvert the Roman system and use it to obtain power. So Tamora is able to complete her revenge against the Romans. As shown, Roman anxieties of order and morality lead the characters of the play to extremes in order to fit into the Roman ideals or to reject these ideals in search of revenge.

Patriarchy constitutes one of the most vicious and essential social forces that permeates Shakespeare's tragedy, and when coupled with Roman anxieties, the result becomes macabre. Patriarchy dictates the fate of both women and even some subordinate men within the social conflict of war. Gerda Lerner, for example, demonstrates how patriarchy permeates society and rules over individuals based on mental schemes that give rights to some and take rights from others. Lerner affirms that:

> . . . it is a patriarchal slave society which gives rise to the systems of ideas that explain and order the world for millennia thereafter. The twin mental constructs—the philosophical and the scientific systems of thought—explain and order the world in such a way as to confer and confirm power upon their adherents and deny power to those disrupting them (5).

As such, this system dictates who receives which benefits, and consequently, takes away rights and freedom from those who oppose the system or those who are seen inferior within that ideology. For example, women in Rome and in Shakespeare's period were confined to the private sphere while men were able to move freely in the private and in the public spheres. While in Rome women were neither able to participate in public meetings nor express their opinion as men did, men were renown for their use of language and rhetoric to convince and

convey their ideas. Similarly, the Early Modern period did not approve of women's participation in public spaces, so women were forbidden, for example, from taking part as actresses on the stage. Thus, women were symbolically and physically silenced when they intruded in the public sphere, for the power of speech was reserved for men. That is why Tamora and Lavinia are treated as objects of exchange whose worth depends on their relation to men.

In Tamora's case, her voice is ignored when she begs for her son to be spared. Tamora is not allowed to grieve since society expects women to suffer silently and obey men. Titus uses his position and status to force Tamora into submission in front of the Roman court, thus, asserting his power and male privilege. The words "patient yourself" and "pardon me" are part of Titus' patriarchal discourse that silences and humiliates Tamora, as she begs for her son's life with no success. Besides being a woman, Tamora is seen an outsider and a barbarian; hence, she is considered a savage who represents a potential threat that needs to be corrected and subdued. Tamora is silenced because she lives outside the norm, and that silence prevents any intrusion into the established *status quo*. This forceful silencing leads Tamora to her transformation. Kelly Sorge affirms: "Tamora's villainy unfolds from her reaction to the horror of her son's death by torture, dismemberment, and fire" (25). In "The Gnawing Vulture': Revenge, Trauma Theory, and *Titus Andronicus*," Willis states, "It is as if the tenderhearted mother simply dies with Alarbus and in her place stands an insulted, vindictive queen" (qtd. in Sorge 25). Because of her rebellion, Tamora needs to be eliminated along with Lavinia to rid the Empire from the female monsters. Tamora becomes an avenger in her search to assert her right to grieve and the grievability of her son. In the end, the death of both female characters serves the purpose of restoring order and re-stating the power of men over women by turning the latter into subjugated beings who resort to monstrous actions

or are given monstrous traits.

While Tamora's behavior is the result of Alarbus' death and her desire to avenge him, Lavinia's transformation is violent and involuntary. Lavinia strives to follow the rules and obey men, yet, despite being submissive and filial, Lavinia is victimized and used as a form for revenge. This shows that Lavinia's rape was not about her; it was about Titus' power. In the book *RomanShakespeare: Warriors, Wounds and Women* (1997) Coppélia Kahn asserts, "Even when she stillhad her hands, Lavinia's use of them was limited to lute- playing and sewing 'tedioussamplers,' the ornaments of her chastity; she has no access to agency' " (qtd. in Sorge 29). So Lavinia shows no agency throughout the play, and she is used as a scapegoat by men. Yet, even while helpless and deformed, Lavinia represents a monstrous threat to the Andronici as she brings shame by having lost her chastity and becoming disfigured. Lavinia's mutilated body lacks symmetry and is therefore outside of the aesthetic norm. Even her family is disgusted with her appearance, but it seems that they are more concerned over the loss of her chastity than her deformed body and her suffering. This emphasis on female virginity is used to justify the murder of Lavinia at the hands of her father. Thus, Roman society unfairly punishes Lavinia for her condition as a woman and for being unable to protect her chastity. While Lavinia suffers silently under Rome's patriarchal society, Tamora chooses to resist and avenge her son. In both cases, being a victim or being an avenger, because of physical appearance or behavior, these women are perceived as monsters that can threaten the established order.

2.2 Monstrosity in *Titus Andronicus:* Male and Female Monstrosities

Culture exercises its power by controlling individuals, molding them and "self-fashioning" them to fit the time and rules of every society. The characters in *Titus Andronicus* are the result of their cultural background, in this case, the Romans and the Goths. In addition, the Early Modern period and the Classical World are intertwined through the cultural movement of the Renaissance that marked Shakespeare's time. So, Early Modern influences are present in the selected text and in its representations of women. In his play, Shakespeare depicts characters and plots that are relevant for both Rome and the Early Modern period. Consequently, an analysis of the monstrous traits in *Titus Andronicus* will reveal the Roman and Early Modern contexts and how they influenced Shakespeare's play.

Before starting with the literary analysis of this chapter, it is pertinent to clarify two terms. The term "monstrosity" for the purpose of this thesis will follow the description of several theorists who define the "monster" as being a cultural construction that changes depending on how each society modifies issues of beauty and morality. Thus, a character's monstrosity will be defined through society's views on the physical attributes and the behavior of each character depending on whether his/her actions are compliant or transgressive. In the case of the term "anatomy," this will be used to refer to the physical/biological body of the selected characters in order to study how physical changes influence notions of monstrosity and how these notions help justify the marginalization and execution of characters whose anatomies have been disfigured. This term has also been used in non-medical scenarios as is the case of Northrop Fryer's *Anatomy of Criticism,* where the term is presented as the study of a theme analyzed in parts: "for that kind of prose work [is] organized around ideas and dealing with intellectual themes and attitudes with prodigious

masses of erudition" (Harmon 27). For the purpose of this thesis, the term will be used in the biological sense to refer mainly to the body. Characters in *Titus Andronicus* will suffer various changes in their anatomies, and these changes will be essential to understand how the construction of monstrosity works on the bodies of men and women throughout the play.

Titus Andronicus depicts monstrosity in the bodies of several characters. The bodily structure plays an essential role since characters use it to judge and determine the worth of an individual. Some of the characters present a type of physical monstrosity that is linked to a cultural otherness inscribed on their bodies, while others suffer from a physical transformation that renders their body grotesque. It is important to clarify that the analysis will begin with the male characters as only devices of counterpoint to later develop the female characters whose monstrosity places them at the margins. This order of character analysis was also chosen to explore the degrees of monstrosity of each character in the second section of the chapter. The analysis will begin by studying the Romans first in each pair since they are used as examples of morality in their society, followed by the barbarians who disrupt the order of the Empire. Therefore, male characters will be analyzed first as a counterpoint for the female characters who will be the main focus of the study. That is why the analyses of male characters are less extensive than those of the female characters who are the main topic of this dissertation, as the title of this research indicates. In fact, *Titus Andronicus* presents an array of characters perceived as monstrous based on their contexts, anatomies, acts, and cultural standards. Without any doubt, Shakespearean characters are fertile ground to explore monstrosity, for his characters are provided with strong feelings, transgressive behavior and tormented souls, and they are sometimes trapped in disfigured bodies.

2.2.1 Male Monstrosity: Titus Andronicus and Aaron the Moor

-Titus Andronicus: Deformed Hero

Titus Andronicus begins the play as a model of Roman perfection; he is a commemorated war general who returns from war to Rome unscathed and announcing his victory over the Goths. Consequently, Titus is praised and loved by the Romans because of his heroic service and his love for the Empire. This can be seen through Marcus' speech referring to Titus in Act 1:

> MARCUS: For many good and great deserts to Rome:
>
> A nobler man, a braver warrior,
>
> Lives not this day within the city walls (1.1.26-29).

As a Roman exemplar, Titus does everything he can to protect the Empire in order to preserve order and avoid chaos. Titus, as a transindividual subject, represents the Roman Empire's ideal of pride and masculinity. His subject position grants Titus the ability to bend the laws to his favor while still maintaining his status and honor. However, as the play develops, his nobility deteriorates for his anger and frustration. In addition, his appearance turns monstrous and deformed when his hand is cut. But, Titus Andronicus accepts this mutilation. So he becomes a physically deformed individual who later discovers that his sons were executed anyway and that his attempt to exchange his cut hand for their lives was in vain. Besides losing his hand, Titus begins to behave erratically, so he experiences external and internal deformities.

The loss of Titus' hand is symbolic since "the hand expresses ideas of action, as well as those of power and dominion . . . it employs weapons and tools and extends its activities through their instrumentality" (Chevalier and Gheerbrant 466-470). Then, Titus' loss of his

right hand symbolizes the loss of his ability to fight. Thus, Titus loses his status as a warrior and his appearance becomes deformed, disrupting order and symmetry. As Titus begins to change physically, he also begins to behave outside of the norm, engaging himself in macabre retaliations that involve regicide and cannibalism.

-Aaron the Moor: Dark Skin and Soul

Aaron's monstrous traits derive from the color of his skin rather than an injury inflected on his body. Aaron, was born with dark skin and spots, two elements considered grotesque by the fair-skinned Romans. Aaron's skin color contradicts the standards of Roman aesthetics. In fact, his dark skin is a source of mockery for the Roman characters. Aaron, the Moor, opposes the Romans with their immaculate fair skin, and this difference in skin color sets him apart as a barbarian, according to Bassianus' comments:

> BASSIANUS: your swarth Cimmerian Doth make your honour of his body's ___
> hue,/Spotted, detested, and abominable (2.3.72-74).

Thus, dark skin and spots suggest an uneven faulty aesthetics that contrasts with the symmetry of Roman hue and balanced composition.

Supporting this view, Lavinia calls Aaron "raven colored-love" being the raven, a black bird often associated to dark magic. Chevalier and Gheerbrant assert that in the ancient world, ravens "were believed to be endowed with the power of casting evil spells" (789). Additionally, "in the mental image of any age, the Black is associated with a primitive stage of human development when barbarity was triumphant" (Chevalier and Gheerbrant 96). These comparisons emphasize the prejudices of the Roman Empire as well as the way how Shakespeare creates black characters to embody social evils. As such, Aaron is not only physically but also morally grotesque. In addition, Aaron is Tamora's lover and co-

conspirator in her revenge plot. In fact, it is Aaron who suggests Chiron and Demetrius to rape Lavinia and to satisfy their lust. Thus, the color of Aaron's skin foreshadows his dark and evil intentions and portrays the Other, the Moor, as wicked and immoral.

Additionally, as Tamora's lover, Aaron becomes the father to a bastard baby whose grotesque appearance resembles his father's. The baby has dark skin and is described as ¨toad-like" by the nurse, who follows the standards of beauty created by the Romans. The bastard baby of the Empress not only resembles his father but also poses a threat to order and stability in the Empire. Aaron's subject position defies the Romans and bring chaos and disorder into society. Shakespeare uses Aaron to depict social anxieties towards the Other, more specifically, the barbarian Other. In sum, for the Romans, Aaron results a monstrous individual based on his dark skin and his evil intrigues and actions seen throughout the play.

2.2.2 Lavinia: Noble Maiden and Victim of Revenge

The male characters in *Titus Andronicus* display monstrous traits that were either inflicted by themselves or were given at birth; however, for women in this tragedy, their bodies and behavior become monstrous because of male actions. Lavinia is maimed and turned into a grotesque body, and she is viewed as a burden for the family. Even though both Andronici have missing limbs, Titus' lack of hand does not seem to weight as heavily as Lavinia's missing limbs since a woman's worth is heavily tied to her anatomy and the worth that society places on her physical appearance. While Lavinia's worth is tied to the men around her and her possibility to procreate Roman citizens and warriors, Titus' worth is inherent to his position as a man and a war general. Gender, as one of the main social forces in the Empire, determines Lavinia's fate and punishment for being a woman who loses her

chastity and beauty; while at the same time, this same society celebrates Titus' deformity as an act of courage that only supports his power over the rest of the characters, especially women. Thus, Lavinia becomes monstrous and is sacrificed to appease her father's shame, while Titus is admired in spite of his violent deeds and his severed hand.

Lavinia Andronicus is Titus' only daughter and a victim of the Goths' revenge. Lavinia has a monstrous anatomy as a result of a vicious crime that alienates her from the other Romans, fragments her image, and deforms her body. The main traits of her monstrosity consist of the cut of her hands and tongue after Chiron and Demetrius rape her. So Lavinia is forced into a vicious transformation from maiden to monster. Prior to her attack, her father describes her as beautiful and chaste, valuable female assets in the Roman Empire, so he says:

TITUS: Lavinia, live, outlive thy father's days,

And fame's eternal date, for virtue's praise! (1.1.170-171).

Even though she is Roman, Lavinia's rape and disfigurement alienate her, for she has lost her beauty and virginity simultaneously.

Throughout the play, Lavinia's attitudes will reflect the Roman ideals of the perfect woman in terms of conduct: Lavinia is docile and obedient. This code of behavior is a part of a patriarchal society where women are subjected to men and must therefore obey their "masters." Cornila states that Lavinia ". . . represents the obedient woman; she follows whatever her father says and whatever the men in her life tell her to do" (12). Lavinia's submission can be observed from the beginning when the audience discovers that Titus' daughter is secretly bethroded to Bassianus and hopes to become his wife. However, Lavinia accepts her father's wishes to marry her to Saturninus, the Emperor, without hesitation. Thus, when Saturninus asks her if she is displeased with the marriage she answers:

LAVINIA: Not I, my lord, sith true nobility

Warrants these words in princely courtesy (1.1.274-275).

From the Roman patriarchal perspective, Lavinia has to follow a man's orders, especially her father's, and so she would sacrifice her happiness rather than oppose her father's commands (Cornila 12). Lavinia accepts her father's words as law since as Richard Saller states, "paternal authority passed beyond the bounds of reason into an excess of domination" (225) in the Roman society. In addition, the Roman father was endowed with almost unlimited power. His words were law, and his wife, children, and slaves had to obey him. Therefore, Lavinia obeys her father and the Emperor regardless of her feelings and prior engagement to Bassianus.

Lavinia's constant acquiescence should have protected her from harm, yet, it is this submission which brings about her to her torture and death, which reveals how Shakespeare denounces this female behavior. Lavinia's attributes and beauty become a target in Tamora's retribution and leads Lavinia to suffer a grotesque transformation: Lavinia's body becomes a battlefield between the Roman and Goth cultures, forLavinia's monstrous appearance and shame are the result of her mutilation and her rape provoked by the Goths. Chiron and Demetrius cut off her tongue and hands so that Lavinia would not be able to reveal the name of her aggressors. Therefore, Lavinia's monstrous transformation estranges and turns her into a constant reminder of Titus' failures to protect his family.

The mutilation of Lavinia shocks the audience due to the brutality of the crime and the repulsion caused by her deformed body; her wounds emphasize her abjection and the fragility of the Roman law. Kristeva has defined the abject as the human reaction (horror, vomit) to a threatened breakdown in meaning caused by the loss of the distinction between subject and object or between self and other. The critic includes crimes in her definition of

the abject since they draw attention to the "fragility of the law" (4). Thus, Lavinia becomes the abject because of her wounds, which horrify her beholders. The transition from beautiful maiden to monstrous being exemplifies Lavinia's journey from being the object of male desire to the unsettling and abominable abject. Lavinia's shocking transformation portrays male anxieties towards female anatomies and male fear that the female body can become terrifying, by contradicting the standards of beauty and chastity. Hence, finding her niece, Marcus urges Lavinia to speak and name her attackers:

> MARCUS: Why dost not speak to me?
>
> Alas, a crimson river of warm blood,
>
> like to a bubbling fountain stirred with wind,
>
> doth rise and fall between thy rosed lips (2.4.20-24).

But, female silence has been forcefully and physically imposed by her rapists, thus, emphasizing Lavinia's fragility and alienation.

Among the images used by Shakespeare, the excess of blood that falls between Lavinia's lips and other parts of her body connects her with the abject, for the blood image produces disgust and fear. With Lavinia's wounds, the audiences are confronted with the abject through the possibility of death: "blood-red—when hidden, it is what conditions life: when exposed, it means death" (Chevalier and Gheerbrant 100). In addition, for having lost her virginity, Lavinia no longer fits into the ideal woman "which in the Greco-Roman tradition was the obedient, chaste, and modest wife" (Kemp 17). On her side, Adele Nozedar argues that "symbolically, to cut out the tongue of enemies renders them powerless, since speech is such a vital aspect of humanity" (363). The same critic affirms that the tongue carries sexual connotations as a symbol of potency and creative energy. Lavinia's tongue was forcefully taken away as well as her virginity, as her uncle states:

MARCUS:But sure some Tereus hath deflowered thee,

And, lest thou shouldst detect him, cut thy tongue.

Ah, now thou turn'st away thy face for shame,

And notwithstanding all this loss of blood (2.4.26-29).

Chevalier and Gheerbrant also assert that the tongue as "the organ of speech, can create or annihilate, and its power is boundless" (1014). Lavinia has been rendered helpless and unable to speak, immersed into a physical female silence.

Marcus emphasizes Lavinia's mutilated body and the loss of her tongue when he brings Lavinia to her father and they discover that she is mute:

MARCUS: O, that delightful engine of her thoughts,

That blabbed them with such pleasing eloquence,

Is torn from forth that pretty hollow cage (3.1.82-84).

Lavinia's disfigurement emphasizes her position as an object whose worth is directly linked to its worth when complete and unscathed. Thus, Tamora's revenge deforms and defiles Lavinia to the point where her own family is disgusted with and ashamed of her. As a scapegoat, Lavinia carries the burdens of a society that turned its back on her and marginalized her. Thus, Titus' daughter is used as a tool for revenge, and her position as subject/object is more evident when the characters discuss her transformation.

Even though the characters initially feel pity towards Lavinia, this pity eventually changes into shame and disgust. Titus' suffering overshadows Lavinia's and because of this, Titus' murder of Lavinia appears to be justified, so that Titus can regain his honor. When her family finds Lavinia after her assault, Lucius, her brother, emphasizes how much Lavinia is suffering from seeing her father cry, even more than for her own disgrace:

LUCIUS: Sweet father, cease your tears, for at your grief

See how my wretched sister sobs and weeps (3.1.136-137).

Even after being raped and mutilated, Lavinia continues to uphold her role as an ideal woman by adopting a filial attitude and worrying for her father instead of herself. Nonetheless, her actions do not save her from her inescapable fate of being sacrificed for male honor. In sum, Lavinia Andronicus is mutilated, and her deformed anatomy no longer complies to the Roman and Greek ideals of beauty. Lavinia's open body provides her with a grotesque anatomy that defies Roman standards of beauty and renders her monstrous, fulfilling the role of the abject. Thus, Titus' daughter becomes a bizarre and horrific vision with the wounds that scar her body and seal her gloomy fate.

2.2.3 Tamora: The Barbarian Other and the Monstrous Female

The last character analyzed in terms of monstrosity is Tamora, the Queen of the Goths. Tamora is constantly using her body in seducing ways as the *femme fatale*. As part of a barbarian tribe, her cultural otherness makes Tamora a threat to the Romans. The changes that she experiences in her body are a constant reminder of her transgressions, for example, when she commits adultery and becomes pregnant. Roxana Hidalgo in *Cuando la feminidad se trastocaen el espejo de la maternidad*(2001) asserts that for Kristeva pregnancy becomes a melancholic experience where frustration and hostility are inscribed on the body of the mother and the feminine becomes devalued and rejected by normality (38). For Tamora, her body is also inscribed by the abject since her anatomy changes and becomes "excessive." During her pregnancy, her body becomes swollen until she gives birth to her bastard son who is also described as grotesque. Additionally, during the final banquet, Tamora consumes the flesh of her progeny without knowing, due to Titus' vindictive scheme. So, Tamora's body

grows in size only to give space to either a monstrous baby or to consume her own children. The queen's body is a receptacle for monstrous beings and actions that will eventually lead to her death and the destruction of most of the Andronici lineage. In sum, Tamora becomes monstrous due to the perception of her cultural Otherness as a Goth, her own punishable actions and her open body, that becomes monstrous due to illegitimate childbirth and cannibalistic incest.

Female anatomy in literature is usually affected by its context for, "Classical and medieval scientific and pseudoscientific ideas about birthing and gynecology also continued to resonate in the early modern period" (Kemp 18). Consequently, female characters and their bodies were depicted taking into account these assumptions and misconceptions regarding female sexuality, debauchery, and childbirth. It was also believed that negative attitudes from the mothers resulted in deformed children. Kemp asserts that "the impact of visual representations on pregnant women, including the belief that they have a physiological impact, for example, can be seen in stories from Shakespeare's time of pregnant women giving birth to deformed babies after seeing chimeras" (19). As such, imagery of negative motherhood is not uncommon in Shakespeare. Tamora is a good illustration of negative motherhood since, for convenience, she wants to get rid of the bastard baby and, for ignorance, she eats her own children.

Tamora's pregnancy defies the Romans as she uses it to humiliate the Emperor by committing adultery. Even though the Empress promises to become Saturninus' loyal wife, she has a lover, Aaron the Moor, with whom she secretly begets a child that will bring shame to Rome. Tamora's sexuality and motherhood directly defy Roman and Early Modern social expectations of motherhood and marriage. For Yalom "Progeny was a major reason to take a wife . . . The Romans thought of marriage as an institution designed to give a man legitimate

children" (30). In addition, the role of childbirth laid heavily on women's shoulders in both the Early Modern period and the Roman Empire where "[w]omen of the ruling classes were expected to bear sons who would become the warriors and leaders of the growing Roman Empire [and] even women of the lower classes were expected to provide their share of the empire's manpower" (Kemp 24). Hence, the female body was considered as a means of production of sons for the empire, and as such, it required constant surveillance by men; thus, the womb becomes public. Tamora exemplifies society's attempt to control the female body as well as the female potential for chaos since she uses her body to seduce and manipulate men as well as to disrupt the Roman royal lineage.

At the beginning of Act I, Tamora is described as a beautiful lady:

SATURNINUS: [aside] A goodly lady, trust me, of the hue
That I would choose were I to choose anew.
If thou be pleased with this my sudden choice,
Behold, I choose thee, Tamora, for my bride
And will create thee empress of Rome (1.1.261- 265).

Not only is she described attractive, but the Emperor chooses to marry her, the Queen of the Goths, over Lavinia and makes the former the new Empress of Rome despite of her ethnic origin. However, Tamora's actions defy Roman standards. Tamora's body becomes an object of exchange since the beginning of the play when Titus gives Saturninus Tamora as a war trophy. Thus, as an object of exchange, Tamora's body is no longer hers but a battlefield for men to assert their dominance. Nonetheless, the Goth Queen refuses to submit to her captors and uses her body to wreck havoc and defy the norms. Harris explains how Tamora owns her sexuality; nevertheless, "she is transferred as if she were property, because she refuses to be owned sexually, she remains a threat to social order" (388). This is an early

example of how women lose their power in Shakespeare's text when men feel threatened by females (Harris 31) and look for ways to take women's power away. But female sexuality can be used as a subversive element to defy the hegemonic patriarchal discourse of society.

Tamora's refusal to comply to social norms that restrict her sexuality and behavior emphasize how the other characters perceive her monstrous nature. Tamora's crime of adultery is portrayed in her bastard and grotesque baby that disrupts the royal lineage and traditional notions of beauty in Rome, and in the reactions and judgement of the other characters that condemn her. Tamora's body becomes monstrous as a result of her sexual drive and infidelity that lead the birth of a grotesque baby. Her child is linked to her adulterous relationship, and as such, its appearance is described as repulsive to emphasize Tamora's fault:

AARON: Well, God give her good rest. What hath he sent her?

NURSE: a devil. [Referring to the baby]

AARON: Why then, she is the devil's dam (4.2.63-65).

Tamora is even referred to as the "devil's dam" by her lover, emphasizing the extent of her sexual transgression. The word "devil" used by the nurse is not only referring to her baby but also discloses Tamora's evil nature and sinful acts. In sum, Tamora's pregnancy constitutes an act of subversion and resistance that defies Rome and emphasizes her power and ability to challenge hegemony.

Nonetheless, physical descriptions of pregnancy were not often presented on the Elizabethan stage: "Although a handful of pregnant characters appear onstage in Shakespeare's plays (e.g., Hermione in *The Winter's Tale*, Juliet in *Measure for Measure*, and Helena in *All's Well*), the more particular details of this aspect of women's lives were not typically represented on stage, nor were they seen as centrally human experiences"

(Kemp 37). In fact, Early Modern representations of pregnant women in plays rarely included images of the physical changes that the female body experienced nor the delivery itself since, "There is no way to know whether these important events were not represented onstage because they remained mysterious to the men who did not partake in them" (Kemp 37) or because "the all-male acting profession would have made staging such scenes logistically difficult, or because such events were not seen as particularly important or worth staging" (Kemp 37). Thus, in *Titus Andronicus,* there is no mentioning of pregnancy, only the birth of the bastard baby. Nonetheless, by giving birth to an illegitimate son, the grotesque appearance of the baby is also linked to the mother. Tamora's "open body," term used by Bahktin, defies Early Modern and Roman standards of ideal femininity, supporting other characters' judgment of Tamora as evil.

Regarding the context, Ancient Rome was a difficult place for women. In "Women in Early Roman Law," John Andrew Couch states that, "In the ancient Roman law, women were always children; this condition being called by the jurist the perpetual tutelage of woman. 'A sex created to please and obey,' to quote the words of Gibbon, 'was never supposed to have attained the age of reason and experience'" (48). Consequently, in Rome the role of women was to please and obey as well as to nurse and give birth to future citizens and warriors. Needless to say, women were not viewed on the same intellectual level as men in the Roman Empire. Tamora, as the new Empress, was supposed to behave and adhere to the Roman law in order to bring prosperity to Saturnino's Empire. From this perspective, Marilyn Skinner states that for a woman who belonged to the high class and had great influence on Rome's fortune, she had to behave accordingly since: "the prosperity and power of the state, the *res publica*, depended upon the continued good will of the gods, who were profoundly offended, it was thought, by the wickedness of the ruling classes" (197).

Therefore, Tamora's open body was considered as the source of said wickedness because " the fault was not laid at the door of the adulterer, as in Greece, but at that of the irresponsible, pleasure-seeking woman" (Skinner 197). Adultery was a serious issue to the Romans due to the threat of scandal for affected men and their honor. Thus, Tamora's open body produced a monstrous birth as a reminder of her wickedness and transgression.

Apart from her open body, Tamora's cultural Otherness as a Goth is considered as another form of monstrosity and mockery by the Romans, as can be observed in the scene of the Royal hunt when Lavinia and Bassianus find Tamora alone in the woods and start to belittle her. For example, Lavinia tells her, " 'Tis thought you have a goodly gift in horning" (2.3.67). So Lavinia refers to Tamora as being lustful without any evidence to back her claim except for rumors or preconceived notions against the barbarians. Lavinia's discourse and choice of words " 'Tis thought" suggests that the Romans already believed that Tamora was promiscuous and that it was in her nature to be unfaithful and lustful. Such preconceptions are the result of a deeply engrained fear provoked by the presence of the barbarian Other and female sexuality. Thus, the hegemonic group is constantly struggling to subdue the barbarians in an attempt to maintain its power. According to Sorge when quoting Kahn, it is Tamora's powerful femininity that helps to arouse fear. Thus, the queen's body suffers a transformation since it becomes a receptacle for life and death: Tamora's body is a vehicle for giving birth to monstrous beings and a means of committing transgressive actions and killing as a way of retaliation.

The Queen of the Goths strikes fear on the men around her precisely because of her sexuality and her foreignness. But Tamora uses these two elements to her advantage and challenges authorities through subversive behavior. Consequently, even her lover, another cultural Other, is cautious of her powerful personality and her ability to manipulate men.

Comparing Tamora to the mermaids, Aaron reinforces Tamora's wickedness and monstrous nature inherent of her condition as a barbarian woman. Lindsey asserts that since Tamora poses a threat to order, the Romans react with rejection, even though they may have felt attraction before recognizing her as the abject later. The Romans often seek to separate themselves from the object of these contradictory feelings through its destruction (4). Tamora, as the female monster, is able to awe and manipulate men. In Cornila's words: "Tamora is the representation of what Shakespeare's culture feared: the equally powerful independent woman. She is also a woman scorned who wants revenge on the man who caused her pain" (27). Tamora's monstrous anatomy presented as a powerful being that controls, frightens and destroys others, constitutes a driving force in *Titus Andronicus*. In sum, Tamora is a threat for the Andronici and for the Roman Empire as well.

2.3. The Degrees of Monstrosity and its implications in *Titus Andronicus*

This section analyzes the degrees of monstrosity of each character. Although most of these characters are considered evil to some extent, some appear to be more monstrous than others because of their race, ethnicity and gender. Additionally, Shakespeare's text constantly juxtaposes binary oppositions such as beauty/ugliness, Roman/Barbarian, male/female, honor/dishonor, fidelity/infidelity, fair/unfair, which are not only binary opposites but, in them, one of the terms is considered superior to the other. Consequently, depending on the elements or hierarchies they present, some characters possess a higher degree of monstrosity; thus, some suffer more than others. For the purpose of this section, the two main male characters, Titus and Aaron, will be analyzed first as a counterpoint to the two main female

characters, Lavinia and Tamora, in order to later determine their respective degrees of monstrosity.

2.3.1 Titus Andronicus: Monstrous Self but still a Noble Roman

Titus Andronicus is the character with the lowest degree of monstrosity since he possesses some specific benefits that shield him from the stigmas that other characters suffer. Firstly, Titus is a born-Roman, he is not an outsider. Secondly, he is also a renowned warrior who has fought for his country. Thirdly, Titus is a white male, which means that his race and gender already position him as superior over others, according to his society. Cantarella supports this view on her work *Pandora's Daughter's* (1981) when she states: "Roman law reflected gender classification a rigidly patriarchal society. The only people with full rights were male citizen heads of family groups. Women, even when not subject to a family head, had no political rights . . . and could exercise civil rights only with the consent of a [male] 'tutor' or guardian" (113). Consequently, Titus' status as a male Roman, head of a family, and consecrated warrior, allows him to transgress boundaries without being judged, as severely as Tamora, in his revenge.

Titus, unlike his daughter, is treated differently when he becomes deformed. The lack of his hand highlights his sacrifice as a father. Even with his disturbing appearance, Titus is still celebrated as a hero and abnegated father while attention is never drawn towards his stump. Titus subject position as a male Roman warrior allows him to maintain his status and sovereignty even in situations in which he should have been judged more harshly or even punished. An example of this can be observed when Titus kills his son Mutius for disobeying his orders. Thus, Titus Andronicus' actions are scrutinized under different lenses from which

he emerges victorious, most of the time. When the messenger arrives to show Titus the heads of his sons, Titus' hand is praised even though it is no longer part of Titus:

> MESSENGER: Worthy Andronicus, ill art thou repaid.
>
> For that good hand thou sent'st the emperor
>
> Here are the heads of thy two noble sons;
>
> And here's thy hand, in scorn to thee sent back (3.1.233-235).

However, it is important to clarify that Titus chooses willingly to cut off his hand while Lavinia, as an object of male desire, has no choice and is raped and mutilated by men. The loss of Titus' hand represents the loss of the Roman general's ability to fight and command the Roman army. Thus, the severed hand is a reminder of the fragility of the Roman law. Nonetheless, even with a mutilated appearance and questionable acts, the Romans do not allocate grotesque or monstrous traits to Titus in the same way they do with others. Shakespeare uses Titus to embody Roman notions of honor, power, and rightfulness in order to contrast the position of the barbarians as dishonorable, wicked, and perverse. Thus, while the other characters are judged or marginalized, mainly the female characters, Titus is commemorated and celebrated. Definitively, gender differences are not only seen in the character's representations, but also in the treatment they receive.

2.3.2 Aaron the Moor: Conspirator and Unrepentful Slave

From the beginning of the play, Aaron is introduced as a negative presence, unworthy of trust. His degree of monstrosity is higher because of his physical traits and his role as a cultural Other. Ethnicity is a key element in Aaron's cultural Otherness and a social force.

As an outsider, Aaron does not adhere to the Roman ideals of beauty. The Romans perceive dark skin as negative, which is why Aaron is constantly humiliated. His ethnic differences frighten the Romans who consider them as imminent threats to the system. Girard asserts that " it is not the other *nomos* [custom or traditional social norm] that is seen in the other, but anomaly, nor is it another norm but abnormality; the disabled becomes deformed; the foreigner becomes *apatride*" (22). Thus, Aaron's physical monstrosity is perceived by his dark complexion that sets him apart as a stranger, a foreigner, and ultimately as the barbaric Other.

Aaron's moral and physical monstrosity emphasizes the fears and anxieties felt by the Romans toward the foreigner, the *barbarous,* the Other. The Moor appears in the play as an accomplice in Tamora's revenge. However, his reason for revenge is revealed later on: it is caused by his innate desire for evil. At first, Aaron appears as a support for the Queen, later as her lover and, finally, as a traitor to the Goths after deciding to keep his baby alive in exchange for betraying and telling on Tamora, Chiron, and Demetrius. After being caught by Lucius, Aaron is once again compared to an evil creature: "O worthy Goth, this is the incarnate devil" (5.1.39). At the end of the play, Aaron presents for the first time a redeeming quality when he implores for his baby's life. And contrary to Tamora's plea for Alarbus, Aaron's plea was heard. However, the Moor is mostly portrayed as a monster, a harbinger of chaos, and as a disease that must be eliminated to preserve order in Rome. Aaron's degree of monstrosity is higher than Titus due to his role as cultural Other and to the evil deeds that he commits consciously and intentionally against the Romans throughout the play.

Regarding male monstrous anatomies, men are also judged when they present any traits that set them outside the norm; however, the judgment and punishment for their transgressions are less harsh than the ones inflicted upon their female counterparts. This is

the result of a cultural and gender bias that is a part of the Roman and Early modern ideologies. Gender and ethnicity constitute social forces that constantly clash during the play in a struggle for power and a search to assert each individual's place within society. The women and the barbarians clearly constitute the oppressed groups; nonetheless, they mostly refuse to remain servile and passive towards the treatment they receive. Still, women are judged differently. They suffer the consequences of gender inequality by being victims of either monstrous transformations or perverse plots against them. Although monstrous male anatomies disrupt order as well as the female anatomies, the reactions from other characters are less judgmental and more empathic depending on the subject's gender and his/her cultural origins. Indeed, the female characters in *Titus Andronicus* possess higher degrees of monstrosity because of their gender, seen as inferior status, as shown in the text. Therefore, from this perspective, a monstrous trait in a woman appears more threatening, detrimental or grotesque than a monstrous trait in a man.

2.3.3 Lavinia: From Roman Beauty to Mutilated Scapegoat

Laviniais one of the most grotesque and monstrous looking characters based on her physical appearance, for her mutilated body provokes fear and disgust. It is pertinent to remember that Romans value symmetry and order above all things. When Chiron and Demetrius cut off Lavinia's hands and tongue, she becomes a grotesque spectacle that mock traditional notions of decorum and beauty. Her monstrosity is evident since it was inscribed on her body, so that her father would be punished whenever he saw her. Her violent and grotesque transformation in the forest provokes her alienation within her own society. The once graceful, fair and beautiful Lavinia turns into a grotesque body that shocks anyone that

beholds her.

Gender as a social force in Shakespeare's narrative helps to portray a highly patriarchal and misogynistic society where the condition of women is equated to that of an object. As such, Lavinia is subjected to inhuman acts that emphasize her helplessness and her powerlessness in front of men, be it Romans or Barbarians. Lavinia constantly follows her father's and brothers' orders without questioning them or thinking about the consequences. However, this constant submission to the male collective does not protect her from the aggressions of others. In Cornila's words: "Lavinia is Shakespeare's portrayal of the stereotypical ideal woman of his culture. This representation is a clear comment on his culture's expectations of women. He takes the idea of the perfect Roman woman, someone who is obedient and a piece of property" (15). Thus, female monstrosity as a form of transgression exemplifies male violence, desires, and fears that are inscribed on the female body as can be seen in Lavinia's mutilation, rape, and subsequent murder, at the hands of her own father.

Lavinia becomes a source of regret and shame for her family. Her appearance disgusts the people around her. However, Titus daughter's attitude is still docile and servile. Lavinia still struggles to uphold Roman ideals and behaves as expected; she accepts her fate and tries to avoid bringing further shame to her family. Following Foucault's premises, Harris states: "Lavinia is a means by which power is marked as masculine and is thentransferred and circulated" (385). On her side, Kemp asserts, "Shakespeare's Octavia, Lavinia, and Portia function in the plays primarily as objects of exchange in marriages meant to weave political alliances and to ensure dynastic continuity" (96). In this play, besides being treated as an object of exchange, Lavinia's body and chastity become a prize. In fact, Demetrius had previously referred to Lavinia as if she were a trophy, and so he says that Lavinia "is a

woman, therefore may be won" (2.1.84). Demetrius' discourse shows how society viewed women and gave men the authority to "win" them and dispose of them if they wished to do so. As such, gender constitutes one of the most toxic social forces in Shakespeare's text since it enables men to mistreat and abuse women. Lavinia's rape is not a personal tragedy but a brutal strategy used to attack and humiliate Titus, patriarch and Roman general. Hence, Lavinia's violent assault is just a collateral damage.

In addition, Lavinia's open body becomes a justification for her murder at the hands of Titus, in an attempt to regain his pride. The positive elements of the open body mentioned in Bahktin about transformation and rebirth are lacking in the portrayal of Lavinia. For Stephen Gregg, "the rape and mutilation of Lavinia cannot simply be read as a crime against an innocent young woman; it is a profound statement to us on the situation of Early Modern women" (2). Hence, the description of Lavinia's mutilation confronts the readers with Tamora's revenge and enables a collaborative sense of sympathy for Titus and her daughter's misfortunes, justifying the father's revenge on behalf of his daughter. Thus, Shakespeare's grotesque images emphasize the viciousness of vengeance and also the consequences for the victim and her/his family.

The loss of Lavinia's extremities and tongue makes it difficult for Titus' daughter to reveal the names of her attackers. By cutting off Lavinia's hands, Chiron and Demetrius deny her the ability to communicate through gestures and writing. Gregg analyzes how "Chiron and Demetrius use to mock [Lavinia] before and after the attack. Here we can see the hierarchy established in the play to which female characters are subservient" (8). The subversive behavior of Lavinia renders her helpless and powerless against the patriarchal mechanisms that subdue and overpower her. In addition, the loss of her hands also deems her as unworthy of marriage. Titus' daughter no longer holds any worth since she can not perform

any traditional female roles such as sewing, cooking or playing instruments, among others. Symbolically, Lavinia is ostracized and robbed of her royal ties and her place within Roman nobility as a result of the vicious act exercised on her body. So her female anatomy, outside of the norm, becomes a burden to society. Thus, Lavinia inevitably becomes an eyesore for the Romans and a reminder of the female representation of the monstrous and the grotesque.

Even though Roman society values Lavinia's obedience and servility, she is not exempted from male desire and violence. Lavinia still becomes a victim of patriarchy. The only action she performs after her mutilation is to show her family who the responsible for the death of Bassianus and her rape and mutilation are; however, after that she only follows orders from her father and brothers. For Cornila, Lavinia's treatment is inevitable since her passivity allows for abuse and aggression. In other words, although Lavinia's passivity is not a justification for her rape and maiming, her submissive attitude makes it easier for other men to trample on her pride and take what they desire from her.

Considering Lavinia's rape, Bramford declares: "Like cuckoldry, rape thus involves a triangular relationship between assailant, victim, and her male proprietor(s). In illegally possessing a female, the rapist dominates and dishonours another man, or men, as well as the victim" (26). Consequently, Titus resolves to kill Lavinia in the final act as to dispel the dishonor that Lavinia brings for him. Cornila affirms that Lavinia's body is an inscriptive site (where men are free to control and abuse her) by citing the scene where Titus asks Saturninus "'Was it well done of rash Virginius | To slay his own daughter with his own right hand, | Because she was enforced, stained and deflowered?"(5.3.36-8), before carrying out the duty of Roman patriarchy and murdering her daughter to get rid of his own shame" (9). Thus, Lavinia's father justifies her murder claiming that the loss of her beauty and virginity

are too painful for him to bear. Lavinia's monstrosity seals her fate as a burden and a scapegoat that needs to be eliminated as a way to restore order and propitiate a new start.

Lavinia Andronicus becomes a martyr and a monster that haunts the characters in the play as a constant reminder of the violence traversing the Roman system and the female body. Katherine Maus affirms that Lavinia becomes a martyr: "In a world where women are treated as sexual property of their male relatives, [where] 'good' women like Lavinia seem destined for passivity and victimization" (qtd. in Cornila 404). Thus, Titus resolves to kill the monstrous body in order to bring order back to society and remove any reminder of his failures by saying: "Die, die Lavinia, and thy shame with thee/And with thy shame thy father's sorrow die" (5.3.43-45). By murdering Lavinia, Titus asserts that he saves her and at the same time that gives her justice. In sum, Lavinia's degree of monstrosity is higher than the male characters due to the consequences that affected not only her life but also the lives of the men around her and the image of the Roman Empire as well.

2.3.4 Tamora: Adulterous Wife and Vindictive Mother

Tamora's monstrosity overpowers that of the other characters due to her role as cultural Other, the use of her sexuality as a way of manipulation, her evil complicity in crimes and atrocious acts, and her procreation of a bastard child. Tamora's monstrosity is initially cultural, so she is seen and treated as an outsider. Her otherness threatens Roman culture and marginalizes her as an object of exchange. Tamora, unlike Lavinia, is not Roman-born, a fact that continues to weight on her whenever she interacts. Besides, Tamora is constantly mocked for her Goth origins. Despite her subordinate subject position as a foreigner and as a woman, Tamora strives to overpower the social forces that wish to oppress and dominate her.

Tamora's strength against these forces arises from her desire to avenge her son and assert his grievability as well as her right to grieve her family. Shakespeare uses Tamora's character as a contrast to Lavinia's character. Hence, Tamora not only represents the negative extremes of female behavior, but also embodies society's fear towards female agency.

Designed by Shakespeare, Tamora's transgressions ultimately lead her to her death, Tamora embodies Roman and Early Modern fears towards strong independent women and the possibility of provoking changes in the *status quo.* Tamora is an example of "a woman who is unconstrained by the patriarchal oppressors, because she was not brought up under the Roman rule. Because she is unconstrained and free, she represents the fear men had that they would lose their control over women . . ." (Cornila 21). Tamora's monstrosity overshadows the other characters' since she chooses to enact transgressions against Rome and the social order. Tamora is unrepentant of her actions and is constantly looking for revenge, an attitude that appears to be unwomanly and "uncivilized" to the Romans.

The fact that Tamora is a woman makes her revenge even more monstrous than Aaron's, which is also a foreigner. In Tamora's and Aarons' cases, both characters are perceived as monstrous: first, because of their role as cultural Others and their ethnicity visualized in different physical traits, second, because of some stereotypical ethnic notions attributed to them, and finally, because of their criminal acts. Tamora ultimately becomes a monster in search of revenge; however, she had already been considered as monstrous for being a barbarian woman with power. Social forces already permeated the Romans' preconceptions of Tamora, which is why she was unjustly silenced and forced to witness the death of her son. In fact, the constant struggle between Tamora and the social forces at work in the Roman Empire constitute one of the driving forces of the play.

Tamora's body is perceived as a source of monstrosity because of the persisting rumors of sexual deviance associated to her barbaric nature. Tamora is an attractive woman and an adulteress Goth who has a lover, who cheats on her husband, the Emperor, and who gives birth to a bastard baby. Thus, male fears towards the female body and its ability to create life are exemplified in the male reaction provoked by Tamora's illegitimate baby born out of wedlock. From this perspective, Tamora's baby depicts the fear of illegitimate descendants but also the power that women have over babies since women give birth and nurse them. Whenever the child is mentioned, the characters emphasize the crime that Tamora committed by cheating on Saturninus. Even though Aaron and Tamora are marginalized and mocked because of their roles as Others, Tamora's body, sexuality, and behavior turn her more monstrous than Aaron's. Both characters are responsible for the birth of the bastard baby; however, it is Tamora's life the one that is endangered by the Empire since, as the nurse says: "The Emperor in his rage will doom her death" (4.2.113). Curiously enough, there is no mentioning of any punishment for Aaron, only for Tamora. Once again, gender, as a social force, is used to emphasize the differences between male and female power and how mechanisms of control are more likely to be exercised on women than on men. In other words, cultural Otherness affects men and women, but the female body is more perceptible to prejudices and punishments because of its sexual potential, its role as object of desire and the male anxieties towards power, female virginity, and motherhood that prevail in that society.

Tamora is killed at the end of the play. She is responsible for the death of most of the Andronici. Because of her vindictive actions, she is denied the possibility of having a proper burial. She is compared to a beast, and her corpse, her once sensual body, is tossed into the wilderness, as seen in the following lines:

LUCIUS: As for that ravenous tiger, Tamora,

No funeral rite, nor man in mournful weeds,

No mournful bell shall ring her burial;

But throw her forth to beasts and birds of prey.

Her life was beast-like, devoid of piety; (5.3.197-201).

Tamora's death and denial of a proper burial signal how disturbing her monstrosity was for the Romans: they even refused to acknowledge her as a human being. In fact, the last words that a Roman speaks regarding Tamora are insults that compare her to a beast. Yet, Tamora's actions were compelled by her desire to avenge her son, a desire that also fuels Titus. However, being a woman, a monstrous woman, Tamora, the Empress, is denied the same privileges that Titus has. Tamora's degree of monstrosity forces her to be at the margins. In sum, Tamora was always considered an outsider, a beast, and a disease that infected Rome and could only be cleansed through her murder.

In Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*, monstrous anatomies are ultimately eliminated in order to cleanse the sins of the Romans and preserve social order. Through the extermination of these characters, Roman society aims to be reborn. The monsters become scapegoats only to be punished and sacrificed. While monstrous male characters shock audiences and become a source of humiliation at times, female monstrosity bears a heavier burden. Monstrous female anatomies are doomed to be marginalized, abused, ostracized, and eliminated in order to bring stability to their respective societies. Consequently, Roman anxieties about beauty and morality that are exemplified in *Titus Andronicus* become the justification for murder and revenge. The depiction of mutilated bodies and grotesque anatomies are elements that Shakespeare uses to emphasize the importance of order and morality in the Roman Empire

and the price that female "monsters" have to pay for disrupting this order. Male and female anatomies are turned into grotesque bodies either by force or by choice to show audiences the threat of the Other and the fear towards female monstrosity.

It is pertinent to clarify that the margins constitute a space where the marginalized reside and hide, either out of fear or necessity. *Titus Andronicus* presents characters that have been forced into the margins. They make their voices heard through the use of bloodshed and violence to assert their existence. The treatment that the Goths received when they arrived to Rome is a statement of power based on how the Roman Empire and the Early Modern period viewed outsiders as negative and potentially evil. The recurrent image of the Other as a threat is not new to the Early Modern period nor to the Romans; however, in *Titus Andronicus* the foreigners are first introduced as victims of war who eventually decide to do justice with their own hands. The foreigners in this tragedy demand justice after the sacrifice of their kin. Thus, Shakespeare provides this group with a motive for vengeance. The Bard also uses them to demonstrate how individuals slowly degrade into avengers who hurt anyone on their way. By the end of the tragedy, the monstrous outsiders are eliminated and order is restored.

But Tamora's voice breaks through the margins and speaks in the public sphere, defying the Roman norm. The Queen struggles against men throughout the play, and she is able to punish her enemies. Tamora refused to be subjected to the Romans and instead inflicted a wound on the entire Empire. Through her wits, cunning words and actions, Tamora ensnares men and uses them as tools for her revenge. Even Aaron, her lover, compares Tamora to mythological monsters such as the sirens by saying:

AARON: This goddess, this Semiramis, this nymph,

This siren, that will charm Rome's Saturnine,

And see his shipwreck and his commonweal's (2.1.22-24).

The cost of Tamora's actions is her life, yet, she avenges her family and through her death, she also seals Titus' fate. Tamora's voice breaks through the silence and gives a voice to the oppressed despite losing her life in the process.

Monstrosity works as a way to create outsiders and scapegoats that represent the evils of society, and so they can be eliminated as a form of cleansing. Any deviation in the body or in the social norms could be enough to frame a person into the category of the monstrous. Thus, *Titus Andronicus* presents several characters whose physical appearances have traits that make them disturbingly grotesque and hateful for the rest. In some cases, these traits are biologically given by birth, or they are forcibly inscribed on their bodies by others. Therefore, Shakespeare's tragedy shows different forms of the grotesque in order to emphasize human flaws. Regarding male monstrous anatomies, the judgment and punishments for their transgressions are less harsh than the ones inflicted upon their female counterparts. Hence, social forces are essential in Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* since they help depict how the Roman context and Early modern influences affected the depiction of the characters in the play.

As mentioned before, some of the most important social forces in Shakespeare's play are gender and ethnicity since it is through them that the Romans abuse and eliminate dissidents. The characters constantly struggle against these forces only in an attempt to reassert their own power as individuals. *Titus Andronicus* uses an array of characters that help demonstrate how society and its power mechanisms go to any length to destroy those who oppose the *status quo*. From this perspective, monstrosity serves as a gateway where gender, ethnicity, and violence collide to create grotesque beings whose appearance and/or actions fuel patriarchal anxieties that try to justify brutality. The female characters in the play exemplify two moral extremes, yet, this contrast does not serve the purpose of glorifying the

ideal woman, but rather shows how women's submission leads to destruction in patriarchal societies. Lavinia, unlike Tamora, suffers a physical transformation against her will and is turned into an omen of crisis and a gruesome reminder of her father's failure. Tamora becomes monstrous based on her actions rather than her appearance; thus, she proves how female vindictive actions are judged more severely than male actions. Thus, the female characters in *Titus Andronicus* appear to be doomed to become monsters regardless of their actions or needs. Both Lavinia and Tamora are depicted as monstrous entities that bring horror and shame to the male characters, and ultimately, to the audience and readers as well.

Monstrous anatomies in *Titus Andronicus* range from forms of monstrosity that include physical deformity to sexual deviance, transgressive behaviors and disruptive acts that turn characters into criminals or targets. Male and female characters suffer transformations throughout the play that lead them to their demise or destruction. Nonetheless, the female characters are more affected by the notions of monstrosity because of their condition as women. Lavinia is raped and mutilated as part of a revenge plot while Tamora is deceived and forced to eat her own children before being murdered and tossed to the beasts. Although both women represent extremes, Lavinia as the ideal woman and Tamora as the *femme fatale,* they meet the same end, both are killed by Titus, the hero of the play. Their killing is a means of purifying the Roman society depicted in Shakespeare's play. The extremes represented by Lavinia and Tamora portray Roman anxieties of order and morality along with notions of beauty and sexual behavior from the Early Modern Period that also followed classical ideals of the Renaissance. In *Titus Andronicus*, representations of female monstrosity sometimes perceived and other times provoked,demonstrate how women's destruction seems to be necessary to provide order and stability in that convulsive patriarchal society depicted at the end of the Roman Empire.

The next chapter will focus exclusively on Lavinia and Tamora, in terms of their respective discourse and agency. After a comparative analysis, the reasons for which they are punished and the consequences of their punishments in the individual and social spheres will be exposed and explored in detail.

Chapter III: Female Monstrosity in Lavinia's Mutilation and Tamora's Behavior

Titus Andronicus presents the audience with a series of violent and grotesque scenes that depict monstrous characters who constantly challenge the *status quo*. These characters are portrayed as such in an attempt to oppose the ideals of morality in the Roman Empire and the Early Modern period. Regarding Shakespeare's female characters in the aforementioned play, Lavinia and Tamora portray two moral extremes: Lavinia stands for the Roman ideals of beauty and morality while Tamora represents the barbarians who stand for the Savage Other and who constantly go against social norms. On the one hand, Lavinia's actions and passivity exemplify Roman ideals of womanhood and femininity that trap Lavinia and place her into situations where she has no power. For example, Lavinia's punishments imposed by patriarchy destroy her body and lead her to an unfair death at the hands of her father. On the other hand, Tamora's actions in the play have negative consequences that will affect the Andronici and also the Roman Empire. For example, Tamora's revenge infects Rome like a disease and transforms characters into monsters by mutilating their bodies or killing them as part of her retribution for her son's death. Thus, these two contrasting female characters are the main subject of the present chapter.

Therefore, this chapter will depict two models of womanhood: the ideal and the monstrous. Lavinia, the ideal woman, is abused, mutilated, and killed. Tamora, as the monster based on her actions and her role as the Barbarian Other, threatens social stability and is also killed. Hence, women are destroyed in a patriarchal society despite their decision to either abide or challenge the *status quo.* In addition, this analysis will explore Lavinia's role as a scapegoat and its implications in the play, Tamora's role as the monstrous female characterized by her rage and amoral behavior, and the other characters' perceptions on female monstrosity. So, the chapter is divided into three main sections: first, Lavinia's

behavior and its consequences at the personal and social levels, second, Tamora's revenge and the repercussions of her actions in the private and the public spheres, and third, a comparative analysis of Lavinia and Tamora as opposite views of femininity.

As mentioned before, Shakespeare's tragedy presents two moral extremes in its two main female characters. Lavinia exemplifies the perfect Roman woman while Tamora stands for the monstrous female. Additionally, the play shows how both characters' subject positions cannot go against patriarchal hegemonic power. As a result, Lavinia and Tamora find themselves struggling against men to reassert their own positions, but, neither end of these dichotomous behaviors liberates or fulfills women's ideals and dreams. As such, the main point of struggle found in the narrative consists of Tamora's search for revenge to avenge her son's death and assert her own position as an individual. Consequently, her behavior leads to the death of several Romans and the creation of additional political turmoil within Rome. In fact, Lavinia's mutilation and rape are part of Tamora's vengeance that emphasizes not only the savagery of the Goths but also the helplessness of women within the Empire. Even though Lavinia is used to portray the ideal Roman woman, she is also used to demonstrate male dominance and the transformation of the feminine into the monstrous. In sum, in Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*, Tamora is a woman categorized as monstrous because of her constant transgressions of social norms and Roman morality, while Lavinia is a woman categorized as ideal because of her obedience and acceptance of the patriarchal norms that reign over the Roman Empire. Thus, the present chapter will analyze the characters of Lavinia and Tamora and will contrast their behaviors as well as the repercussions of their acts.

3.1 Lavinia's Behavior and its Consequences at the Personal and Social Levels

The character of Lavinia represents the Roman ideals of womanhood by means of her beauty, her submission, her silence, and her willingness to blindly obey men's orders. Roman notions of femininity dictate very specific expectations of what a woman should be, and Lavinia has been self-fashioning herself to uphold those ideals. Following Greenblatt's definition of "self-fashioning" as the control mechanisms and "the cultural system of meanings that creates specific individuals by governing the passage from abstract potential to concrete historical embodiment" (3-4), Lavinia exemplifies this signifying practice through her actions and behavior that strive to follow and protect the ideals of her time and society. By faithfully following notions of ideal femininity, Titus' daughter becomes an object of desire for the Romans, but she also becomes a target for the barbarians who seek to destroy Rome. In fact, Lavinia's actions suggest a "distinctive personality, a characteristic address to the world, a consistent mode of perceiving and behaving" (Greenblatt 2) that mirrors patriarchal expectations for women. Nonetheless, despite following Roman expectations of femininity, decorum, and morality, Lavinia is constantly abused and humiliated by the Goths and by the Roman men around her who weep for her loss of virginity and beauty, but who ignore her suffering.

Lavinia's subject position as Roman female renders her helpless against the patriarchal hierarchy that dictates her fate. It is important to point out that Lavinia's rape mirrors other female characters from classical texts that Shakespeare used for inspiration in the writing of his play. The image of the docile, submissive woman who turned into a martyr or victim is not uncommon in literature. Lavinia follows ideals of submission and helplessness that show how women can become either martyrs or victims. Therefore, Titus'

daughter will suffer a gruesome transformation that will affect her personally, but it will have a deeper effect on the men in her life who consider Lavinia a commodity and a reflection of their own power. In sum, Lavinia, as a transindividual subject, represents the female ideal of Roman society; however, being a woman, she is not safe from abuse and is constantly subdued and humiliated. In fact, Lavinia's individual limitations as a submissive woman treated as an object will facilitate her abuse by the men around her. As said before, her fate is not uncommon in classical literature as can be observed in the characters of Lucrece and Procne, who will be discussed as follows.

3.1.1 The Drama of Individual Limitations: Lucrece, Procne, and Lavinia

Roman notions of morality and virtues are an essential part for this research in order to determine what notions construct the ideal of the perfect Roman woman that Lavinia self-fashions. For example, DimistriosMantzilas discusses different elements that constitute the perfect Roman matron. According to Mantzilas, since 19 B.C a Roman matron "had four distinct roles to play during her life: to be a daughter, a sister, a wife (or a widow) and a mother, showing her respect and devotion to her father, brothers, husband and children" (306). Thus, Roman women had to put family before everything else except for the Empire itself. Mantzilas also asserts that some virtues mentioned in funerary inscriptions of praised Roman women include "conservative mentality (*an-tiqua vita*), domesticity (the act of being *oikouros*/ *domi-seda*), friendly graceful speech (*comitas*, *sermonelepido*), and frugality (*frugi*). Moreover, [the woman] had to be an exemplary wife and housewife (*exemplum bonaeconiugis*), well educated, in order to educate her children who would become useful and chaste citizens" (317). Consequently, the ideal Roman woman ought to be conservative,

graceful, domestic, and educated enough to raise her progeny and encourage chastity for females. Such signifying practices produced obedient and subservient women who followed men's oders and were willing to sacrifice themselves to do so. These characteristics helped fashion women who would be easy to control and who would instill these ideals into their children in order to give the Empire obedient and compliant citizens. Thus, these women were victims of male power and domination.

Foucault has already addressed the role of power struggles in society and how these struggles for domination create resistance, since, oppressors and oppressed are in a constant fight for control. As a result from these struggles, society has attempted to control and police bodies. Therefore, taking these notions into account, several feminists have used Foucault's theories to analyze the reasons and effects of power on the female body. From this perspective, one of Foucault's four main themes is the hysterization of the female body. This concept refers to the process in which the female body was qualified for some activities and disqualified from others through science, as a way to support chauvinistic and sexist ideas regarding women. For example, women were believed to be fit for tasks that did not involve physical labor such as taking care of the children, cleaning the home, and cooking. They were not allowed to do physical labor or to participate in activities that involved the use of their intellect since women were not considered smart. By means of this hysterization, patriarchal structuralization subdued women and excluded them from the dominant discourse and the cultural field, forbidding them from participating or speaking in public spaces (Mandel 6). For these reasons the female body could be used as a means to provoke political turmoil and to fulfill a personal revenge since its worth was linked to male ownership of the family or the husband. This treatment of the female body as an instrument used by the hegemony for its

own benefit, can be observed through female characters such as Lavinia, Lucrece, and Philomena, who were used and abused by men.

Although women in Rome had more freedom than women in Greece, they continued to be subdued to the power and control of men. Roman society asked females to follow the traditional model of femininity in which women had to be weavers, chaste, merciful, frugal, homely, and only married once (Álvarez 14). Basically, Roman women had to be chaste, educated, loyal, and had to display decorum and fulfill their role of reproduction as the base of matrimony and as a civic duty. Lavinia presents these characteristics in the play. For example, when she meets her father and brothers in Act I, she says:

LAVINIA: In peace and honour live Lord Titus long—
My noble lord and father, live in fame!
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 (1.1.160-165)

Lavinia expresses how much she suffers for her family's absence and openly shows her sorrow as part of her duties. She uses the word "tributary" to describe her tears, presented as an offering for her brothers. This tribute emphasizes Lavinia's responsibilities as a daughter in her family. She has nothing worthy to offer them, so she offers her tears and funeral rituals in return. As a dutiful daughter and a beautiful woman, Lavinia is coveted by several men in the play, including Saturninus, Bassianus, Chiron, and Demetrius. The female body becomes an object, a prize, and a battlefield where patriarchy will fight for power and leave scars as punishment. Lavinia' ideal behavior will not benefit nor save her from suffering; on the contrary, it will facilitate her abuse as part of a political plot and personal revenge.

The use and abuse of the female body as political strategy and personal revenge against the male relatives of the raped woman depict this body as an object that belongs to the patriarchal hegemony. Marcela Lagarde, quoted in Claudia Mandel's *Mapa del Cuerpo Femenino y suDeconstrucción*, asserts that the body of women includes the bodies and lives of their progeny and partners, the judicial and political institutions, and the mythological, philosophical, and ideological conceptions that give the female body a name and functions, while at the same time, forbids behaviors and provide obligations and punishments for women (4). These impositions and obligations make the female body a symbolic territory that depends on the will and perceptions of men. Apart from imposing "ideal" behaviors on women, patriarchal societies also transform the female body into a war zone where females are used and mis-used, based on male desire. Thus, Mandel asserts that the female body is reduced to sexuality and an "occupied" body, which in turn makes it difficult for women to develop their own subjectivity as individuals. So the female body, as a site where political, social, and cultural axes converge, results in the perception of women as a territory where socio-ideological discourses and struggle assert dominance over females. And a strategy used to control and punish the female body is rape. Historically, rape ". . . has served as a lightning rod for the fears and concerns of the relative power of men and women. It brings to light relative social privilege, economic entitlements, legal protection and rights, and the value placed on women as individuals and contributors to society" (Regehr&Regehr 32). Therefore, the rape of a woman that leads to a political turmoil is not uncommon in classical texts as can be seen not only in Lavinia's case but also in the rape of Lucrece in Ovid's *Fasti* and in the rape of Philomena in Ovid's *Metamorphosis*. These female characters will be analyzed in this section to emphasize how the image of rape is used as a weapon against women and as a means of dominating, humiliating, and chastising the female body.

According to Karen Bramford in *Sexual Violence on the Jacobean Stage*, rape suggests "an understanding of sexual assault as a function of culture, rather than nature; of a socially constructed male dominance, rather than a biologically determined impulse" (qtd. in Gregg 7). Then, since chastity was a prize for men, when the female body is assaulted, the rapist dominates, humiliates, and dishonors the woman and more importantly the men who "own" her. Consequently, rape adopts a phallocentric nature in these tragedies where the female body is used to dominate women and punish their men. From this perspective, Kaitlyn Regehr and Cheryl Regehr in their article "Let Them Satisfy Thus Lust on Thee: *Titus Andronicus* as Window into Societal Views of Rape and PTSD" discuss how when women are victimized by men, society becomes divided and tensions arise. For them, rape is ". . . this situation that throws light on generally masked inequities in socially and legally ascribed power, entitlements, and protection; and the value placed on women as individuals and contributors to society" (Regehr& Glancy 28). In these situations, society decides whether the woman is to blame or not, based on the morals and social values of their time. Thus, the previous quoted critics ask the following question: "Was the aftermath of her rape and torture viewed to be pain and suffering endured by the victim, or shame and dishonor to her family—most particularly the male members of her family?" (28). This question becomes even more relevant when analyzing Lavinia's rape and the reaction of her family. As such, rape emphasizes the drama of individual violation for women since their bodies become a battlefield for male dominance as well as objects of exchange and male desire.

To address Lavinia's limitations and the role of her rape as political/personal retaliation, it is relevant to study the cases of Lucrece and Philomena since they could have been a source of inspiration for Shakespeare's Lavinia. For example, Lucrece, in Ovid's *The Rape of Lucrece*, was the wife of Collatine, a renowned Roman general. One day,

Collatinewas talking about his wife with Tarquine, and he describes Lucrece as the perfect woman. Tarquine becomes intrigued and decides to find out by himself by going with Collatine to see how devote Lucrece is to Collatine. The two men confirm that Lucrece was hard working and devotedly waiting for Collatine's return. After this, Tarquin decides to visit Lucrece while Collatine is away and rapes her by not only subduing her with a knife but also threatening her to kill a slave and blaming her of adultery with said slave if she continues to resist. Overcome with grief and fear Lucrece gives in and is raped by Tarquine. Soon afterwards, she calls for her husband and father to tell them what happened. Despite the men's pleas and affirmations that she was the victim, she resolves to kill herself to cleanse her shame and her husband's. Her death results in the exile of Tarquine and his family, thus, creating political turmoil in the territories where Lucrece resided.

The next example is Philomena's rape in Ovid's *Metamorphosis.* There is even an allusion of this play in *Titus Andronicus.* Philomena is the sister of Procne, wife of king Tereus of Thrace. One day, Tereus sees Philomena and becomes infatuated with her and rapes her. He cuts off her tongue afterwards and imprisons her, so that she could not reveal the name of her assailant. Nonetheless, Philomena weaves what happened on a tapestry that she sends to her sister Procne with help of a female slave. Once Procne learns the truth, she kills her son by Tereus, Itys, and serves him to Tereus and frees Philomena. At the end, Procne and Philomena ask the gods for help and both women are turned into birds, so they can escape Tereus' pursuit. In this way, the king of Thrace loses his heir and is transformed into a hoope, thus, provoking political turmoil in the kingdom of Thrace.

These narratives are essential when one analyzes Lavinia, since Lavinia's rape, much like Philomena's and Lucrece's, is a deep political statement because the body of these women is a male possession. Regehr and Regehr declare that "Rape represented a threat to

political power and social standing" (29). Even in these tragedies, as bargaining chips, women have no agency and are helplessly submitted to the patriarchal order that polices their bodies. Therefore, female subjects become targets during political and personal conflicts, as is the case of Titus' daughter. As Gregg asserts, "Lavinia is overtly and stereotypically female. In the opening scene, she is the helpless victim of a patriarchal struggle and the object of exchange in a matrimonial debate: she is a pre-discursive and discursive 'woman'" (9). Thus, from the very beginning Lavinia is presented as an object of exchange with no power over her destiny.

Hadfield compares Lavinia's body to the body of Rome: "[Lavinia's] role here prefigures her larger symbolic function in the play as Rome's body politic, mistreated and abused by its inhabitants to their own cost" (qtd. in Regehr&Regehr 29). Woodbridge adds: "The body of Lavinia represents the image of society, the invasion of the body of a single woman representing political siege" (qtd. in Regehr and Regehr 29). However, the impact of Lavinia's rape and mutilation take on a secondary role when compared to Titus' shame and suffering of having had her daughter deflowered and disfigured. From a patriarchal perspective, Titus was the victim of the crime and not Lavinia since it is *his* suffering that matters the most and is acknowledged by the other characters. For example, in Act III, Lavinia weeps for her father's sorrows instead of her own. Even Lucius communicates this to Titus by saying: "Sweet father, cease your tears, for at your grief/ See how my wretched sister sobs and weeps" (3.1.136-137). Female suffering is once again ignored in the play just as Tamora's suffering was ignored and silenced during Act I. In sum, Lavinia's effort to uphold Roman ideals, even after her rape, leads her to an inevitable death at the hands of her own father as the ultimate solution to cleanse the family. Titus' daughter has no power, and her voice was forcibly taken from her. Yet, even in her tragic condition, she continues to

submit to the men around her and is willing to be killed by them. In sum, Shakespeare's Lavinia has no voice following her victimization, "underlining both her position as extraneous to the central issues of the play, and the powerlessness of women who suffered rape in that era" (Regehr&Regehr 29). Thus, female agency is almost non-existent for Lavinia whose body becomes a tool for revenge and a reminder of her subordinate subject position within patriarchal Rome.

Going back to Ovid's female characters, Lucrece also contributes to represent the role of the ideal woman who serves her husband to the point of sacrificing herself to keep his honor untainted, as Lavinia accepts her killing as a sacrifice for her family. But Philomena's story resembles Lavinia the most and is also alluded in Shakespeare's tragedy. Cornila states: "It is not until Lavinia tries to tell her father that she had been raped by showing him Ovid's text that he finally realizes the situation. Titus says, "treats of Tereus' treason and his rape, /And rape, I fear, was root of thy annoy" (48-49). Titus even goes as far as comparing himself to Procne and Lavinia to Philomena. Therefore, when Lavinia is found, her family speculates that a "Tereus" had deflowered her, and then later in the same passage, Marcus says: "Fair *Philomel*, why she but lost her tongue/…But a 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" (3.1.38-43, emphasis added). Therefore, it is clear that Shakespeare uses Ovid's text as a source of inspiration. Nonetheless, there are relevant differences between Philomena and Lavinia, mostly related to their manifestations of agency.

Philomena, just like Lavinia, is a victim of rape and is restrained from revealing the identity of her rapist. Nonetheless, Philomena is determined to out her rapist and be avenged. Determination and pride, according to Gregg, are usually associated with male characters, but Ovid gave these traits to Philomena. Lavinia, on the other hand, is deprived of

determination and pride and is thus depicted exclusively as a martyr. Even when she communicates the names of her assailants, she limits herself to obeying the orders from her father and ceases to communicate her desires or sorrow during the rest of the tragedy. In fact, when she faces Tamora and her sons, right before her rape, Lavinia does not insult the men directly, instead, she directs her insults towards Tamora, the other woman present in the scene. Cornila asserts that "[Lavinia's] nonaction represents more than just her following her father's orders, it also represents her inability to be separate from her upbringing under patriarchal oppression" (13). Cornila also states that "Shakespeare's Lavinia is portrayed as the 'good' woman in the Roman and 16th century English culture. Even though there were some women who were more outspoken in Elizabethan culture, most men believed that women should be obedient and devoid of opinions"(13). Therefore, Lavinia's passivity and submission lead to her abuse and torture at the hand of men who only see her as a commodity. While Philomena chooses to defy men and rely on women (her sister and her handsmaid) to be rescued and avenged, Lavinia relies on her father who ultimately murders her to erase his shame. Consequently, while Lavinia's submission leads her to her rape and death, Philomena's determination leads her to her escape and her revenge at the hands of her sister Procne. Although both women were sexually assaulted, Philomena is able to take her revenge while Lavinia is killed before witnessing Tamora's death.

Hence, Lavinia's personal tragedy is molded by Lucrece's and Philomena's; the three women were raped and their rapes lead to political turmoil. But the three met different fates. In Lavinia's case, she is murdered by her father to cleanse her impurity and relieve Titus from his shame. Lucrece chooses to kill herself due to patriarchal notions that valued chastity and fidelity more than women themselves, and Philomena achieved her revenge and is turned into a bird, so she could escape. It is important to notice that passivity and submissiveness

are not rewarded in Shakespeare's text, just as masculine behavior is not punished. And yet, Tamora achieves her revenge at the cost of her life, while Lavinia is killed before and is deprived of witnessing hers. In fact, Lavinia's helplessness is evident not only in her lack of agency but also in the treatment she receives from the male characters in *Titus Andronicus* who leave her no option but to become a burden.

3.1.2 The Burden of the Andronici Family

In *Titus Andronicus* female sexuality acquires a central role as a means to justify violence against female bodies, as is the case of Tamora and Lavinia who suffer at the hands of men who desire their bodies or fear what their bodies are capable of doing. For example, Lavinia's rape constitutes an attack on the Andronici family, more specifically on Titus, and as such, her mutilation turns Lavinia into a burden for her brothers and father since she has lost her worth according to the Roman perspective, that is, her beauty and virginity. At the beginning, Titus' daughter is depicted as a beautiful maiden who stands for the Roman ideals of morality and virtues. Lavinia is praised in Act I as "Rome's rich ornament," and for Titus she is the "cordian of mine age to glad [his] heart" (1.1.52, 166). Chastity was highly valued in the Roman Empire, which is why Lavinia is coveted bythe men in the play as can be seen in Act I when Saturninus chooses to marry Lavinia, and Bassianus reveals that he also was set to marry her. Additionally, during the royal hunt, Chiron and Demetrius also talk about their desire and lust for Lavinia prior to her rape.

In her work entitled "The Battle of Good and Evil in Shakespeare," Erin Miller discusses the implications of being a man or a woman in Shakespeare's time and the treatment of female sexuality in *Titus Andronicus.* In this same source, Albert H.

Tricomiexpresses that “along with the pit’s association with Lavinia’s lost chastity, it symbolizes Rome’s loss of civilized value” (qtd. in Miller 41). In this sense, the pit represents “the horrible fecundity of evil, which is simultaneously aligned with female sexuality” (qtd. in Miller, Tricomi 41). The critic goes far as to compare the image of the pit to Lavinia’s sexuality. From his perspective, two men had sex with Lavinia and three men fall in the pit which can stand for a symbol of the vagina; thus, three men violated the female territory represented by the pit and Lavinia’s vagina. Through the loss of her chastity and beauty, Lavinia becomes alienated and marginalized: as a woman who is unable to marry because she becomes grotesque and has no place in civilized Rome. For Legatt “Lavinia’s identity is in crisis now that she lacks hands, a tongue, and her chastity” (qtd. in Miller 9) since, according to Tricomi, “in depriving her of language they have deprived her of human contact and of normal life taking not just her chastity and her speech but her humanity”(qtd. in Miller 32). So, when Titus asks Saturninus, during the final banquet, if it was rash of Virginus to slay her daughter for being raped, Saturninus agrees with Virginus’ action “Because the girl should not survive her shame/And by her presence still renew his sorrows” (5.3.40-41), thus confirming how the loss of a woman’s chastity and value in society justify her death. Consequently, Lavinia becomes the abject and then, she is no longer a valuable Roman citizen, but rather an obstacle and gruesome reminder of defeat and shame for Rome and her family.

Lavinia’s deformity sets her apart. For example, the loss of the tongue has deep implications for Lavinia’s social involvement. Chevalier and Gheerbrant state that the tongue, as the organ of speech, can “create or annihilate, and its power is boundless. It has also been compared with the beam of scales- it weighs and gives judgement” (1014). So, Lavinia’s agency is almost completely nullified by the removal of her tongue which renders

her mute and unable to call for aid. However, “Paradoxically, her mute mangled presence speaks much more eloquently. . .” (Chaudbury 5), to what Kahn adds “Lavinia who existed before the rape as an object of desire and exchange was a construction of the language wielded by the men who exchanged and desired her” (qtd. in Chaudbury 5). Consequently, Lavinia’s mutilated and ravished body “has exited from the matrix of male desire and created a new text outside its linguistic parameters, which cannot be deciphered unless she translates it back into the vocabulary of patriarchal literature” (Chaudbury 5). As can be seen, when Lavinia used Ovid’s *Metamorphosis* (a text written by a man) she could offer information about her rape. During her rape, Lavinia asked to be killed so that no one would see her body or ravish it, but her words became “a directive to her assailants for her torture” (Contos 6) since she calls forth “ and experiences the physicality of her words as the Goths do sexually ‘tumble her’ and physically maim her [so that] never man’s eye may behold [her] body” (Contos 6). Lavinia’s attempt to communicate without a tongue resulted in a blood gush. No one could interpret her words. Thus, she was forced into a form of self-referentiality.

By losing her place in the Roman society, Lavinia is alienated into the private sphere of her family, and even her family sees no worth in the now disfigured and tainted woman. In Act IV while Lavinia, Marcus, young Lucius, and Titus eat together, Miller points out how “Titus makes multiple puns on the word ‘hands’, which feel callous given Lavinia’s inability to feed herself” (32), which only reinforces how even her family shows no real support for Lavinia. In fact, her family minimizes Lavinia’s grief and rather use it to make her feel guilty for having brought shame to them and encourage her to take her own life:

TITUS: [To Lavinia] Thou map of woe, that thus dost talk in signs

When thy poor heart beats with outrageous beating—

Thou canst not strike it thus to make it still.

> Wound it with sighing, girl—kill it with groans—
> Or get some little knife between thy teeth,
> And just against thy heart make thou a hole (3.2. 12-17)

It is not until Titus realizes that the Goths are responsible for her rape that he decides to take revenge, not for Lavinia, but for his own pride.

The rape of Lavinia should not be understood as an individual crime but rather as a collective act inscribed on a female body owned by the Andronici. Societal expectations for women restrained Lavinia's reactions and also provided men with the authority to disregard Lavinia's suffering and emphasize their humiliation of having their prize (female chastity) taken away from them. Consequently, men are allowed to take revenge, as Titus does, but Roman society forbids the same option for Lavinia (representing the female collective). Since, Lavinia has brought shame to her family; consequently, she is killed to restore Titus' honor: "Die, die, Lavinia, and thy shame with thee, / And with thy shame thy father's sorrow die" (5.3.45-46). Lavinia, martyr and scapegoat, is purged to cleanse Rome and to bring order back to society. Her fate demonstrates how women are perceived as expendable as a necessity for society and for their families in the Roman Empire as well as in the Early Modern society.

3.2 Tamora's Actions and their Repercussions in the Private and the Public Spheres

In order to understand the extent of Tamora's actions and the relevance of the spaces where Tamora unravels her schemes, the terms "private sphere" and "public sphere" first need to be defined. Zati Nizam accurately describes the public sphere as follows:

> Publicsphere is a classic theory introduced in 1962 by a German philosopher, Jurgen Habermas in his book, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*. Public

> sphere is defined as the society involvement in communication as they [the citizens] are free to represent and express their opinion with one another. It creates a space for them to engage in a conversation (2).

Consequently, this public sphere provides citizens with the opportunity to express their ideas and socialize. But, during the Roman Empire and the Early Modern period, patriarchy perceived females as inferior and has historically deprived this sphere from women while silencing them at the same time.

As a result, society denied women the opportunity to interact in public spaces unless they were supervised, especially during the Roman Empire depicted by Shakespeare in his play because "[in] the first centuries of history, Roman law reflected a rigidly patriarchal society" (Cantarella 113). Men often ignored women's opinion and did not allow women in public spaces alone since they were considered as second-class citizens. The fact that women were denied the access to knowledge and social spaces emphasizes the constant power struggles where truth and knowledge become resources for men to control women. As previously stated by Clark: "Power produces knowledge, or at least the apparatuses of knowledge, and knowledge becomes power: the two are bound together" (104). In fact, refusing women the opportunity to access power is an effective means of subduing them and controlling their actions. Unfortunately, the male collective has used this strategy on women by forbidding them from accessing the public sphere and delegating them into the private sphere in order to neutralize them and strengthen women's subject position as the oppressed subservient group who dwells in the private sphere.

The private sphere also refers to the place reserved for family life, a place where women could express their opinion, although this does not mean that their voice was superior to men's. Patriarchy also dominated the private sphere, as the patriarch of the family would

always have more power than the rest of the family. Cantarella asserts that "the *pater* [father] was an undisputed and absolute lord, whose power extended to the right of life and death (*ius vitae ac necis)* over all those under him" (113). Nonetheless, the private sphere allowed certain level of recognition for women since based on social constructs, this was the place where they could serve their husbands and raise their children. The fact that Tamora's actions have repercussions for both spaces is proof of Tamora's success since she was able to affect her place within the family (her marriage with the Emperor) and her place within Rome as a barbarian/citizen. While Lavinia lives and hopes to thrive in the private sphere, Tamora defies and fights her way into both the private and public spheres, in an Empire that took her captive and later made her Empress. Both the private and public spheres are directly disrupted by Tamora's revenge. As a consequence, she is treated as a beast, a monster, and a pest throughout Shakespeare's text.

3.2.1 Tamora's Complicity in the Maiming and Murders of the Andronici

After witnessing the death of her son Alarbus, Tamora adopts an active role while pursuing her revenge against the Andronici. In doing so, her acts will have negative repercussions for the Andronici and Rome. According to social constructions of femininity of the Roman patriarchal society, as a mother, Tamora had to accept her son's sacrifice passively and grieving in silence. Roman decour dictated that: "The worst possible model for young men could be 'a woman, young or old or wrangling with her husband, defying heaven, loudly boasting, fortunate in her own conceit, or involved in misfortune or possessed by grief and lamentation - still less a woman that is sick, in love, or in labor'" (Spellman 37). However, Tamora refuses to consider the death of her son as ungrievable and decides to

subvert political authority by planning and executing revenge that unravels chaos and violence on "civilized" Rome. The death of Alarbus, her son, forces Tamora to become ruthless. Tamora will pursue her retaliation to punish the Andronici and validate Alarbus's grievability. Thus, Tamora's revenge is divided into three different actions (the rape and maiming of Lavinia, the framing of Titus' sons, the death of most of the Andronici) that affect different spheres in society and result in visible traits of monstrosity on her victims. Her vindictive acts ultimately escalate from private revenge to public revenge on the Roman Empire itself as can be seen through the death of the Roman Emperor Saturninus in the final banquet.

The former Queen of the Goths will use her wits and words to deceive men into underestimating her and doing her biding in order to punish Titus. Tamora's first step towards her retribution is appearing as a concerned and conciliatory figure who cares for the Romans. She intercedes for the Andronici and asks the Emperor to forgive Titus for his actions against Mutius. This is Tamora's second transgression into the public sphere since her first transgression was to express her grief and beg for her son's life. So, the new Empress pretends to be a conciliator between Titus and the Emperor to gain their trust while weaving their demise, and so she declares:

TAMORA. But on my honour dare I undertake

For good Lord Titus' innocence in all,

Whose fury not dissembled speaks his griefs:

Then at my suit look graciously on him;

Lose not such a noble friend on vain purpose (1.1.433-437).

Tamora uses the phrase "Whose fury not dissembled speaks his griefs" to emphasize how Titus' anger was at fault for his actions and that he should be forgiven for his actions, which is a kind of behavior allowed for men. Not long after, during the royal hunt, Tamora uses her speech once more to convince men into following her instructions. This time she manipulates her children:

> TAMORA: And had you not by wondrous fortune come,
>
> This vengeance on me had they executed.
>
> Revenge it, as you love your mother's life,
>
> Or be ye not henceforth called my children (2.3.112-115).

The Empress calls for revenge and threatens to disown her sons if they fail; by threatening their pride, she instigates them to fulfill their role as men and as dutiful sons. As a result, Bassianus is killed, Lavinia is raped and maimed, and Quintus and Martius are framed for the crime. At this point Tamora's revenge affects Titus' private sphere since the men and women that are hurt or killed belong to his family.

Power relations and shifts among power within those relations are essential when discussing the role of Tamora in *Titus Andronicus.* Tamora begins the play as a slave, dispossessed of her previous royal status as Queen. Her subject position swifts from being a part of a hegemonic group to becoming a part of a minority that is now being oppressed by as a result of the war. The oppression imposed on the Goths, and specifically on Tamora, partially includes her silencing and her humiliation as an outsider. The Romans constantly emphasize the extent of their power through actions such as the ritualistic murder of

Alarbusand their refusal to heed Tamora's pleads. Consequently, Tamora's subject position as the oppressed self emphasizes her powerlessness as a woman, slave, and as a defeated queen. Nonetheless, Tamora's character uses her sexuality and wits to move through different power relations by establishing a marital alliance with Saturninus, and later by plotting against the Andronici to kill them and taking away their social status in the Roman society. Tamora is able to change from a subordinate subject position to a hegemonic subject position as she becomes Saturninus' wife and begins her plot against her enemies. Tamora does not tie her worth to her body or her behaviors, rather, she is able to gain her worth through her transgressive actions that lead her towards becoming Empress in an enemy territory. And part of Tamora's revenge is the rape and maiming of Lavinia.

The realization for Titus that her daughter is no longer beautiful nor chaste brings great sorrow since she will not be able to marry nor bear children. By attacking Titus' progeny, Tamora reduces Titus' successors and his morale by almost leaving him without a family and without his prized reputation. After Lavinia's rape, Tamora and Aaron frame Quintus and Martius, Titus' sons, for the murder of Bassianus and so, both are executed. Slowly but surely, the Andronici are being eliminated by Tamora to pay for the murder of Alarbus. As a result, Titus' family has decreased and Titus' ability to fight is diminished by the loss of his right hand. Along with the death of Titus' sons, Tamora's schemes have turned the Andronici into traitors and murderers in the eyes of the Roman Empire; thus, their reputation is now infamous and devoid of any honor. Tamora's transgression of the public sphere is clear.

In spite of apparently assuming a subject position of a powerless female, Tamora is able to use her female sexuality to trick men and overthrow her enemies. Tamora and Titus

as antagonists represent opposing cultural notions since "The way that Tamora, the representation of the Other, goes against Titus, the embodiment of a proud Roman citizen, shows Shakespeare's belief that it was not only women that Roman patriarchs thought inferior, but also people from outside their culture" (Gregg 17). By pretending to be helpless and obedient, the Goths have destroyed one of Rome's proudest and most powerful families. Tamora's initial revenge against Titus robs him of his eldest sons and mutilates his only daughter. So, the Empress has wounded Titus' lineage and pride in one day, and she has hurt Titus' private sphere by slowly reducing his family and damaging his reputation in Rome.

The extent of Tamora's revenge against Titus in the private sphere will lead Titus into a desperate situation where he loses most of his sons and is constantly reminded of his helplessness by the presence of her mutilated daughter. Tamora's final retribution against Titus takes place during the final banquet, even though the price for her final revenge involves the sacrifice of her life and that of her children. Gregg notes that "The 'licensed killing,' a privilege initially reserved exclusively for Roman rituals, is a strategy taken up by Tamora as being the most effective method of communication in a play saturated with discursive violence" (11). As such, just as Titus avenged his sons, so does Tamora when she seeks justice for Alarbus.

During the banquet, Titus tricks Tamora into eating her children and stabs her in front of the Emperor. Thus, Saturninus kills Titus, and the Emperor is then killed by Lucius. Even though Tamora is killed, she is indirectly responsible for the death of the patriarch of the Andronici since Saturninus kills Titus to avenge Tamora. Tamora's revenge almost exterminated an entire family. By the end of the play only Marcus and Lucius survive the tragedy. Hence, Titus' private sphere is attacked and destroyed by Tamora, a woman who represents the barbaric Other which the Romans feared and rejected. As a disease, the Goths

infect the Andronici and lead them to a gruesome ending as a form of retribution motivated by an act of revenge. Titus public sphere is also attacked and destroyed by Tamora since his powerful image and reputation are damaged by her act of revenge.

3.2.2 The Fall of the Roman Empire at the Hands of Tamora

In Shakespeare's play, Rome represents the public sphere, an entity that is directly affected and disturbed by the intrusion of the Goths into their city. The actions of the Goths not only affect Titus' private sphere, but the entire Empire also suffers from Tamora's retaliations. The first action that has deep repercussions for Rome is Tamora's bethrodal to Saturninus since this act in itself proclaims the power that the Goths now possess. Chaudhury asserts that "Saturninus is drawn towards her just after selecting Lavinia as bride and her marriage is synonymous to coercive occupation because as the vanquished queen she has no option but to acquiesce" (6). And yet, the Emperor's actions confer upon Tamora the opportunity to obtain the power necessary to defeat her enemies. So the new appointed Empress uses her newfound power to create a division between the Emperor and Rome's most renown family, the Andronici. Tamora grieves her son, but she is also filled with the desire to avenge him by asserting Alarbus' grievability and her own right to weep for her son. Thus, in her desire of revenge, Tamora promises to kill her captors:

> TAMORA: 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. (1.1.453-458)

The Queen of the Goths swears to vanquish her enemies and achieve her revenge. In order to do this, she will bid her time while the opportunity arrives. Fortunately for her, the opportunity comes when she is wed to the Emperor, providing her with enough power to begin her plot against the Andronici. By manipulating the Emperor, Tamora weakens the Roman State and divides its forces. The Roman Empire is introduced, at the beginning of the play, as an empire with an internal turmoil as it attempts to choose a new ruler. But the incorporation of the Goths fragments the already troubled society. So, as a result of her newly found power, Tamora is able to begin her revenge by framing Titus' sons for the murder of the Emperor's brother. Additionally, Tamora shatters the bond between the Andronici and Saturninus in order to manipulate the Emperor and attack the Andronici. Therefore, Tamora becomes a part of the hegemonic group and exercises her power over her enemies, thus, inverting power relations by swifting from a powerless female slave to a powerful Roman Empress. As such, Tamora's private revenge permeates the entire Roman Empire, from the private to the public sphere, spreading through Rome like a disease.

3.3. Comparing and Contrasting Shakespeare's Female Characters

Lavinia and Tamora represent two opposite images of femininity, socially constructed notions of what is considered to be the good woman and the monstrous woman. The following analysis will focus on the differences between each portrayal and its repercussions for both characters in the play. These assessments are based on social constructions from the Roman context and the Early Modern context that permeate *Titus Andronicus* and that are present in the actions of the female characters of such a play.

3.3.1 Lavinia as an Ideal Model of Femininity and Tamora as the Monster

Femininity in the Roman context consists of a series of virtues that define the ideal woman. These virtues are exemplified through Lavinia who is beautiful, gentle, chaste, and pliant. Seneca talks about the ideal woman by defining its antithesis as follows: women who do not go to bed early, drink a lot and rival men in wrestling and wine, vomit, are sexually active rather than passive, give into vices, and reject their femininity (qtd. in Castresana 23). These ideas of what ideal femininity was for the Romans helped justify the systematic control and punishments directed towards women. Consequently, women had to uphold ideals of morality and civic duty to serve the Empire and produce adequate descendants that would also serve and protect Rome. Women who failed to do so were subjected to humiliation, mockery, and/or punishment. From this perspective, Lavinia fits into the Roman standards of beauty and perfection. Her role as obedient daughter and future wife and mother endows Titus' daughter as the perfect woman. Meanwhile, Tamora seems to oppose these ideals by means of her barbarian origins, her active and controlling behavior, and her unrestraint sexuality that society considers improper for women. The dichotomous nature between Lavinia and Tamora in *Titus Andronicus* helps show Roman views of perfection and monstrosity that eventually leads to the disruption of social order.

Although Lavinia follows Roman law and ideals, her fate inevitably leads to her death as a result of her passivity and her role as a male object of exchange. From the beginning of the play, Lavinia appears as a model of ideal womanhood when she is introduced by Bassianus as: "Gracious Lavinia, Rome's rich ornament" (1.1.55). The word "ornament" emphasizes Lavinia's role as an object, ever changing, depending on her appearance and her ability to provide services/goods/progeny. Bassianus and Lavinia are in love, yet, Lavinia

respects and follows her father's orders when Titus proclaims that she will marry Saturninus, the Emperor. In fact, Lavinia's passivity and willingness to perform the female role ascribed to her society leads her to be helpless and alone. Her rape as well as her death are examples of crimes of a patriarchal society because "The laws of men are written upon Lavinia, with her stumps, mutilated mouth and stab wounds" (Gregg 9). In fact, men take advantage of Lavinia's attitude and inscribe their own power and laws on her body and mind through acts of physical and discursive violence.

Lavinia's worth as a commodity for the Andronici derives from her worth as suitable spouse and future mother for the Empire. It is relevant to clarify that women had a relevant role in society as wives in Rome and "control over women passed 'naturally' from fathers to husbands. [So] Married women were expected to behave according to the dictates of *pudicitia*—a code word for strict morality, including its literal meaning 'chastity'" (Yalom 25). In addition, Bernice Harris asserts that Titus' daughter is "a means by which power is marked as masculine and is then transferred and circulated" (38). Ironically, Lavinia's passivity and willingness to comply with her father and brothers turn her into a pawn. As Ashlie Contos contends: "through Lavinia's vulnerability and subservient nature, she acts as a hostage to others' assertion of themselves and of their dominance" (3). Consequently, Lavinia's worth is tied to her role as a currency for men, and her fate is dictated based on her chastity and future possibilities of developing female roles according to patriarchal Roman society.

Lavinia's body mirrors that of Rome. Much like her body, the Empire has been infected and mutilated by the Goths, and thus, Lavinia's rape transforms her not only into a monster but also into a grotesque entity that reminds the audiences of Titus' failures and the

failures of an empire that was unable to protect one of its citizens. It is important to point out that, Lavinia upholds Roman ideals even when Chiron and Demetrius rape her. She only directs her insults to Tamora, another woman, rather than directly opposing Chiron and Demetrius: No grace? No womanhood? Ah, beastly creature!/The blot and enemy to our general name!/Confusion fall" (2.3.182-184), "O Tamora! thou bear'st a woman's face" (2.3.136), while she refers to Chiron and Demetrius as "sweet lords." Lavinia even attempts to convince Tamora of sparing her by appealing to mercy: "O, let me teach thee. For my father's sake/That gave thee life, when well he might have slain thee/ Be not obdurate - open thy deaf ears" (2.3.173-175). However, her words only anger further Tamora:

> TAMORA: Remember, boys, I poured forth tears in vain
> To save your brother from the sacrifice,
> But fierce Andronicus would not relent.
> Therefore away with her, and use her as you will (2.3.162-166)

Even after being maimed, Lavinia worries more about her family than herself. Therefore, as an abnegated daughter, Lavinia struggles to reduce her father's anguish and follows his every command until she finds the opportunity to reveal her attackers. Lavinia, as a Roman model for maidenhood, becomes a prize for the male characters who constantly struggle for power. Even Tamora, though she is not male, casts aside her womanhood in order to mimic male behaviors to attain power through Lavinia's assault. In fact, the attack on Lavinia's body is a symbolic attack on the political body of Rome, perpetuated by the Goths.

Moreover, Lavinia suffers from a deconstructed identity when she has to abandon her identity as "Rome's sweet ornament" to become a disfigured and violated body. Originally,

Lavinia is introduced as the daughter of a famous war general, a woman of Rome, and later, the wife of Bassianus, son of the late Emperor of Rome. These categories frame Lavinia and confer upon her a proper role into the civilized Roman Empire. Nonetheless, after her rape and maiming, she becomes a widow, a monster, and a social pariah. In other words, Lavinia suffers a drastic change in social status as well since she ceases to be a part of the hegemonic civilized Rome to become an "abject Other." Her body is "subjected to warfare, her victimization is adumbrated and seemingly aroused through words" (Contos 4). In addition, Lavinia is aroused through words by the speech that Chiron and Demetrius use to humiliate her after raping and mutilating her body, thus, effectively erasing her identity from a female subject to a nameless grotesque "thing." Lavinia is also enforced into a physical silence that strips her from the possibility of communicating verbally with others. As a victim, Lavinia, who was a dutiful daughter, will need her father's care and nursing, thus, inverting traditional gender roles by feminizing Titus into the role of caregiver. This reversal of roles, due to Lavinia's personal tragedy, further humiliates Titus and his family.

Lavinia's prior worth depended on her ability to become a mother because her womb was supposed to consolidate patrilineal continuity as well as patriarchal ancestral values and proliferation of the Andronici family. According to Yalom "Progeny was always a major reason for a man to take a wife. Like the Hebrews and Greeks before them, the Romans thought of marriage as an institution designed to give a man legitimate children" (30). Thus, the female body in Rome was functionally a receptacle of male fertility and then an incubator. The womb fulfilled an essential role even though women themselves were not necessarily viewed as individuals. Nonetheless, their bodies required constant tutelage in order to make women fulfill their domestic obligations. Cantarella discusses how women were always

under the tutelage of men, whether their father or their husband. For this critic, marriage "merely gave a woman a new master. And it is no exaggeration to call the husband a master, in that he acquired power over his wife and ownership of property in the same way" (117). As consequence, Lavinia is deprived of this possibility, and her identity is socially transformed and morally and physically destroyed as she shifts from daughter to wife, from wife to widow, from virgin to a no longer chaste girl, and from a beautiful maiden to a monster. Lavinia's subject position constantly changes due to patriarchal rules, hegemonic power, and male abuse and brutality.

In sum, Lavinia's existence is not her own, it belongs to others and as such, she is destined to suffer, to be tortured, and eventually murdered. As a consequence of her subordinate position in society, Contos asserts that, "as [Lavinia] is traded between familial and societal spheres, her roles continually diverge, yet her value as the 'changing piece' is used up, she becomes deflated currency and can be discarded" (7). While Lavinia's suffering as an individual remains unaddressed, Titus resolves to kill her to erase his shame and his guilt. Chaudbury states that Titus' "resumption of the role of *paterfamilias* is of course charged with awareness that unlike Prospero (Shakespeare's Duke of Milan in *The Tempest*), he has lost control over his daughter's sexuality and can no longer market his precious commodity" (5). The people who constructed Lavinia's sense of self in the public and private spheres are the same people who betray her as they resolve to eliminate her since Lavinia no longer serves any purpose for Roman society.

While Lavinia obeys the rules of a patriarchal society, Tamora abandons established performativity imposed upon the female gender. Judith Butler asserts that: "when agreed-upon identities or agreed-upon dialogic structures, through which already established

identities are communicated, no longer constitute the theme or subject of politics, then identities can come into being and dissolve depending on the concrete practices that constitute them" (28). In fact, the Queen of the Goths adopts male practices in order to achieve her revenge. She ignores Lavinia's pleas and allows her sons to rape Lavinia in order to punish Titus, although Lavinia hoped for Tamora to be emphatic toward another woman. But, Tamora has hardened her heart, and her desire to get revenge is unmovable. These two opposing images of womanhood exhibits the moral extremes of a society that considers women as either accessories or as threats and a society that places women against women.

Tamora, former Queen of the Goths, is first introduced in the play as a defeated queen and as a pleading mother, but she gradually transforms herself into a threat to the Roman Empire. As a war captive, Tamora has no choice but to obey her captors, yet, she disobeys them when she refuses to accept Alarbus' sacrifice and instead pleads for his life. Nonetheless, Tamora's pleas are ignored and Alarbus is brutally murdered. Therefore, this killing transforms Tamora from grieving mother to monstrous avenger. First, Tamora understands the helplessness of her position as a woman within Rome, and that in order to succeed in her revengeful actions in such a patriarchal society, she has to cast aside her femininity to engage in male behaviors that will allow her to obtain power.

Apart from her subsequent acts of revenge, Tamora's cultural otherness emphasizes her monstrosity. Chaudhury believes that Tamora's Gothic origins underscore her deviant womanhood and "the liason between Aaron and Tamora foregrounds the alliance between rampant sexuality and the barbaric and gendered Other" (5). In fact, Tamora's behavior challenges all forms of hegemonic masculinity in *Titus Andronicus*. When discussing feminism and power, Lai affirms: "women as speaking, acting and thinking subjects in the

developing process of history, politics, society, and culture and with possibilities of resistance to dominant power" (22) are few. As such, Tamora as a woman, openly opposes the dominant male power in *Titus Andronicus* by using her sexuality, voice, and wits. In fact, open verbal confrontation and public enmity initiate Tamora's rivalry with the Romans during Act I. However, it is Saturninus' choice to marry Tamora that allows her to rise within Rome.

Chandhury affirms that this enmity is "translated into insidious subversion and personal revenge as Tamora starts operating from within" (5). So Tamora accepts Saturninus' marriage and emphasizes her incorporation into Rome to Titus when she says literally, "Titus, I am incorporate in Rome" (1.1.465). The word "incorporate," according to D'Alessandro, indicates "how the barbaric element insinuates itself into the body politic and its admission is even facilitated by Titus' improvident decisions" (9). By refusing the throne and giving it to Saturninus, Titus indirectly allows for the incorporation of the Goths' into the Roman Empire. Thus, the following fragmentation and deterioration of the Rome are a result of the inclusion of the barbarians in society as a disease in the political body of Rome, represented by Tamora as a transindividual subject who is perceived as monstruous. Greenblatt discusses submission narratives in Early Modern culture when he states:

> It is, of course, characteristic of early modern culture that male submission to narrative is conceived as active, entailing the fashioning of one's own story (albeit within prevailing conventions), and female submission as passive, entailing the entrance to marriage in which, to recall Tyndale's definition, the "weak vessel" is put 'under the obedience of her husband to rule her lusts and wanton appetites (239).

Tamora's role as new wife should have been submissive, but she refuses to obey and casts aside her femininity to become a ruthless and violent avenger.

After Saturninus asks Tamora for her hand in marriage, Tamora accepts for two reasons: first, as a captive she has no choice, secondly, she knows that by accepting she will gain more status and power to make the Andronici pay. It is important to emphasize that the Roman Empire seems to be preyed by internal struggles for power (Bassianus and Saturninus) and external (the Goth invasion). At this point, Tamora's words after accepting the proposal resonate with Rome's imminent fall as the Barbarians destroy the Empire from within. Tamora's incorporation as Empress immediately threatens Titus since now a barbaric woman holds more power and better standing than the man who murdered her son. Chaudbury states that "the seeds of destruction are sown at the moment of Rome's supreme glory by its chief architect [Titus]" (1). Thus, in a way, Titus is responsible for Tamora's incorporation.

Chung-Hsiung Lai asserts that self-fashioning engages "submission to an absolute power or authority situated at least partially outside the self—God, a sacred book, an institution such as church, court, colonial or military administration" (qtd. in Greenblatt 8). However, Tamora refuses to submit and instead of self-fashioning her identity based on Roman ideals of femininity, she self-fashions her actions to mirror the barbaric behavior exemplified by her captors when seeking retaliation. Besides, the presence of a new Empress with a connection to the barbaric self foreshadows the threat of a powerful and "savage" woman who will weave her revenge. In addition, Tamora uses her wits to convince the Emperor, her sons, and Aaron into following her biding to eliminate her enemies and fulfill her vengeance. Firstly, Tamora appeases Saturninus and convinces him of trusting her. Besides, she wants to eliminate the

Andronici easily by pretending to be their friend. The fact that Tamora ensnares Saturninus so easily reminds the audience of the traditional patriarchal view that fears the power that women have to tempt men and "lead them to their ruin," as Eve did with Adam in the Bible.

Tamora begins her revenge by targeting Titus' property and pride, Lavinia. Through Lavinia's attack, Tamora exposes her monstrous behavior in her totality by allowing her sons to ravish and mutilate Titus' daughter while at the same time she denies any kind of mercy to her. Horrified at the assassination of her husband at the hands of Tamora's sons, Lavinia calls Tamora "barbarous" and judges her ruthless nature:

LAVINIA: Ay, come, Semiramis- nay, barbarous Tamora –

For no name fits thy nature but thy own! (2.3.118-119).

Without Bassianus, Lavinia understands that she is at the mercy of the barbaric new Empress and her progeny. Tamora asks for a dagger to kill Lavinia, but her sons convince her not to do so in order to satiate their lust. Although Tamora did not suggest the rape and her sons were the ones that executed it, this monstrous act is attributed to Tamora. Therefore, male lust and violence in this revenge becomes an attribute that others give to Tamora to amount to her monstrosity based on her refusal to pardon Lavinia. In this way, Tamora's hardened heart makes her appear more monstrous to other characters since, as a woman, she did not empathize with a victim of the her gender. According to Gregg: "Tamora's strategic decision to carry out the most violent form of revenge possible . . . results in her resorting to the same violence that has been displayed by the 'Roman spectacle of retaliation'" (7). As a result, Tamora replicates the behaviors from the men around her, especially Titus. Hence, the former

Queen of the Goths casts away her femininity in order to engage in violent and merciless acts.

Tamora's refusal to obey patriarchal laws and her decision to follow male violent behavior are considered traits of female monstrosity. During the hunting day, Lavinia calls Tamora a "beast" to dehumanize and strip her from her femininity since Tamora engages in male oriented behaviors to punish the Andronici. Once Lavinia realizes that Tamora will not spare her, she insults her: "O Tamora, thou bearest a woman's face" (2.2.136), to emphasize Tamora's lack of humanity and hence compassion. By means of her words, Lavinia highlights how Tamora looks like a woman but behaves like a man. Lavinia evokes Roman values of pity and mercy but forgets how Tamora begged Titus for those same values when the Goth Queen asked for Alarbus' life to be spared. This unravels the unnatural roles that the Empress assumes for her revenge. At this point, Tamora realizes that in order to succeed as a woman in the Roman Empire, she must adapt to the new circumstances and rebel against feminine standards of behavior.

After the murder of Bassianus, Martus, and Quintus, as result of her scheming, Tamora is still determined to complete her revenge by executing the remaining Andronici. The option for female characters in Shakespeare's texts is to either act as feminine and servile women or to "unsex" themselves as Tamora and Lady Macbeth did in order to obtain a similar power as their male counterparts possess. So, Tamora is depicted as unrepentful and violent throughout the play. Her enemies constantly refer to her as a beast with phrases such as a "mother bear," and "ravenous tiger." Thus, she is denied funeral rites since "her life was *beastly* and devoid of pity" (5.3.197, emphasis added) . In fact, the Andronici use the term "beast" to humiliate Tamora and emphasize her monstrosity; however, Tamora pays no heed

and uses her wits and sexuality to complete her revenge and vanquish her enemies. Tamora's transgression of social boundaries is associated to her willingness to reject her gender and her sexual desire.

In sum, Lavinia and Tamora depict extremes of female gender stereotypes constructed by patriarchal ideologies from Rome and the Early Modern period. As stated previously, the female body is a receptacle for male desire and also for male fears and anxieties towards female anatomies. Lavinia's anatomy mirrors the anatomy of the Roman Empire that gloats on its purity, power, and morals. Just as the Roman Empire is under attack by the Goths, so is Lavinia's body when she is raped by two Goths in the forest. By being penetrated and dismembered by the Goths, Lavinia's rape symbolizes an attack on the Roman Empire that is also penetrated by Tamora and her children, resulting in the death of many of its citizens. Michael Neil confirms that adultery and contamination are concepts usually related to ideas of disproportion, monstrosity, and deformity, which eventually lead to illegitimate offspring (140). Tamora's adultery contaminates the Empire and results in an illicit child that is described as deformed. However, despite being deformed, the baby belongs to the new Empress in Rome and could eventually have a claim on the Roman throne. As a result, the Empress' uninhibited behavior (translated into her adultery) depicts carnivalesque attitudes that link her personality and open body to aspects of debauchery and degradation that result in a bastard baby. Tamora, as Empress of Rome, disregards Roman notions of morality and self-restraint; and brings disgrace and chaos to the Romans, as opposed to Lavinia who constantly struggles to uphold Roman ideals of femininity that help consolidate the Roman society.

In the same way in which Lavinia's womb stood for the future of Rome, Tamora's

womb represents a consuming entity that can manipulate and devour men indiscriminately. Chaudhury states, "the categorization of Tamora as an avenging mother or as a demonic womb 'breeding . . . outrages' fails to encompass the multiple threats she poses to the patrilineal order" (5). Tamora chooses to allow her sons to raid Rome's treasury which is represented by Lavinia's virginity. The womb image depicts extremes in Tamora and in Lavinia: while Lavinia's womb is tainted and is not able to fulfill her procreative role, Tamora's womb fulfills its role in a distorted way by producing an illegitimate heir. While Lavinia's womb represents Rome's pride and hope for a better future, Tamora's womb represents the evils of the barbarians, the infection of the savage Other for the Empire, and ultimately, the end of an era.

Additionally, Tamora's maternal body becomes the point of origin and final sepulcher for Chiron and Demetrius when Titus enforces on Tamora by tricking her into eating the flesh of her dead sons. Thus, the image of the womb as devouring and dangerous is mirrored by the pit where Bassianus' body is tossed and where Martus and Quintus are framed. Roberts notes that Shakespeare's text "plays out the association of the female with the forest, revealing a barely repressed fear of and revulsion to the mysterious 'other' and emphasizing the importance of male culture and male rivalry over erotic attraction" (42). In addition, the female body becomes central in Shakespeare's play because of its potential for life and death. The pit as a symbolic womb of the earth (another symbol of femininity: nature/women) swallows Bassianus and condemns Titus' sons to their death. Similarly, Tamora's womb has the potential to usurp the Roman throne and also becomes the final resting place for Chiron and Demetrius. As a result, the female body and more specifically, the womb, is used as binary symbol that can become benign when policed by male authorities as Lavinia's body

used to be, or, it can become malign when it is unrestrained as Tamora's. Consequently, Tamora's monstrosity lies in her ability to transmute life into death by using either her body, her words, or her wits to lead men to destruction.

Tamora's monstrosity is influenced by Early Modern notions of femininity which burden the portrayal of female characters whose only options consisted of becoming martyrs or monsters. Following the publication of the *Malleus Maleficarum,* by Heinrich Kramer,Europe experienced an era of unparalleled misogyny – particularly in England. From Knox's *First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monsterous Regiment of Women,* Swetnam's*The Araignment of Lewde, Idle, Forward and Unconstant Women: Or the Vanitie of Them, Choose You Whether, With a Commendation of Wise, Vertuous and Honest Women,* to the anonymous *A Brief Anatomie of Women, Being an Invective Against, and Apologie for the Good and Bad of That Sexe,* the streets [in Europe] became littered with anti-female invective. This anti-female vilification is found in the two-dimensional portrayals of female Shakespeare's characters: Tamora and Lavinia. Thus, the various anti-female invectives depicted women as being a source of weakness and danger while, at the same time, as beings subjected to certain behaviors such as obedience, politeness, and silence.

Lavinia and Tamora are judged by the expectations used to measure a woman's value in society. On one hand, Lavinia strives to be an ideal Roman woman, but when she fails to meet these expectations, she is murdered by her father. On the other hand, Tamora rejects Roman ideals and behaves according to her own desires, and she is also killed at the end. Depicted as opposing representations of women, Lavinia and Tamora are doomed to the same tragic fate regardless of their choices, which indicates how women are helpless in a society where they are unable to find freedom of action or fulfillment of any kind.

As moral extremes, Lavinia and Tamora are either used or destroyed by male agents in order to restore order. Katherine Eisaman Maus discusses the differences between Lavinia and Tamora. She affirms, "in a world in which women are treated as the sexual property of their male relatives, 'good' women like Lavinia seem destined for passivity and victimization (376)" while Tamora excels by "refusing to play by the rules" of Rome. Thus, through manipulation, ruthlessness, and cunning, Tamora "transfers herself from the extreme of subjugation, as Titus' captive, to the apex of power as Empress of Rome" (Maus 376). Lavinia is often portrayed as a dutiful daughter and martyr, but the play tends to minimize her suffering when compared to the suffering of the men around her. *Titus Andronicus* portrays a Roman woman who, following Greenblatt's views, self-fashions her identity to become what others expect from her, but this self-fashioning is useless since she is ravished and disfigured at the hands of her enemies. On one hand, this defilement of the female body and chastity affect Lavinia physically, mentally, and socially as it turns her into an "abject Other" in need of cleansing to restore order. On the other hand, traditional readings of Tamora deem her as vindictive, lustful, and monstrous because of her actions. Tamora's does not feel the need to self-fashion herself after the models of Roman ideal femininity, but rather, she self-fashions her identity after her male captors. Nonetheless, being a woman, Tamora's emulation of Titus (as an avenger) is perceived negatively since this representation goes against Roman standards of moral and submission for women. Ultimately, Lavinia is portrayed as an ideal submissive woman she is bound to become a victim when her female assets are destroyed. And Tamora, as the monster, will inevitably be eliminated to purge society of the evils she represents.

3.3.2 Lavinia's Silence and Tamora's Speech

Silence and speech are essential aspects to be considered in the construction of identity and in the process of communication. In Lavinia's and Tamora's cases, both women are silenced, so that they become a commodity for Titus and the Romans. Lavinia represents the silent, obedient woman; she was raised under patriarchal norms that urge her to follow men's orders, especially those in her family. Lavinia's words are limited from the beginning. She suffers through different instances of silence that will fragment her body and identity to the point where she becomes devoid of any agency and is eventually murdered. Tamora, unlike Lavinia, was raised within a different culture, one that was considered barbaric by the Romans. The Goth Queen is willing to engage in murderous and bloody crimes to avenge the death of her eldest son. It is important to take into account that, when Tamora was taken prisoner by the Romans, she lost her status as Queen and was forced to migrate to a new and hostile land. Tamora is then submerged into a symbolic silence by depriving her of her royal status and by treating her as a slave with neither voice nor rights. Because of these limitations, Tamora becomes a fierce and ruthless avenger who speaks and acts. Thus, silence and speech in Lavinia and Tamora will lead these women to a series of punishments at the hands of the male collective.

The power of speech and silence constitutes driving forces within relations of power between men and women. Language as a means of communication presents a series of possibilities, for example, it can be used to communicate truth or falseness, but whether the message is believed or not will depend on the receiver. If the messenger is a woman, her voice is ignored by a male receiver many times. Hélène Cixous expands this topic in "The

Laugh of Medusa" where she describes women's experiences when raising their voices as follows:

> Every woman has known the torment of getting up to speak. Her heart racing, at times entirely lost for words, ground and language slipping away—that's how daring a feat, how great a transgression it is for woman to speak—even just open her mouth—in public. A double distress, for even if she transgresses, her words fall almost always upon the deaf male ear, which hears in language only that which speaks in the masculine. (881)

Coincidentally, for women in the Ancient World (and even today), in many occasions their messages are ignored or believed to be false, resulting in a symbolic silence. Nonetheless, Cixous encourages women to express themselves:

> It is by writing, from and toward women, and by taking up the challenge of speech which has been governed by the phallus, that women will confirm women in a place other than that which is reserved in and by the symbolic, that is, in a place other than silence. Women should break free of the snare of silence (881).

Thus, it is through the ability and desire to speak that women reassert their identity and their very existence. However, women's speech can be easily ignored, and women who ventured to speak in the public sphere or contradict men are at a constant risk of being silenced and/or punished. Sheryl Glenn in *Unspoken* asserts that speech can be understood as masculine and silence as feminine. Additionally, she elucidates on how silencing individuals is an example of male power over women. In other words, powerful individuals would silence the weak or

speak for them in order to demonstrate their own power and their ability to convey their ideas. Notwithstanding, critics study silence as a form of power, for example, Meyers affirms:

> Silence speaks. Its message may be diffused, masked, subtle, coercive, powerful. Its communications may be unwanted, unheeded, undermined, underestimated. The simple fact that it is unstated contributes significantly to both its potential and its abuse, since the importance of silence is often directly proportionate to its extension. That which is unexplicit is not necessarily unsaid . . . usually it constitutes a crucial element of what is communicated (1).

Unfortunately, silence in Lavinia and Tamora is not a form of power but rather an example of oppression by a hegemonic group that restricts their voices and aims to control them and their stories. While Lavinia accepts her silence more passively, Tamora constantly attempts to subvert her subject position by challenging the hegemony and by making her voice heard. But sometimes, silence prevails.

In ancient civilizations such as the Roman and the Greek, silence was considered a virtue for women while the ability to speak in public spaces and be persuasive was reserved for men. Silence was attributed to women as a way to "neutralize" them within the private sphere. Lavinia represents an ideal woman since she speaks only when spoken to by men, and her discourse is complementary to what her male kindred have already said, since her answers consist of her agreeing with whatever order she is given. This behavior is clear when reviewing the few lines she has on the play. An example of this can be found in Act I when Saturninus accepts Titus' proposal to marry Lavinia, and so the Emperor says: "Lavinia, you are not displeased with this?" (1.1.273) to what she answers "Not I, my lord, sith true nobility

/Warrants these words in princely courtesy" (1.1.274-275). Here Lavinia accepts her fate despite being bethroded to Bassianus, the man she loves. Tamora, contrary to Lavinia, is constantly speaking out of place and contradicting men. She also uses her words to manipulate and convince others into doing her bidding:

> TAMORA: And had you not by wondrous fortune come,
>
> This vengeance on me had they executed.
>
> Revenge it, as you love your mother's life,
>
> Or be ye not henceforth called my children. (2.3.112-115)

Tamora uses her words to manipulate her sons and ask them to take revenge for her and that if they do not, then they would be dishonored by her. These words fuel her sons' pride and rage which lead to the murder of Bassianus. In fact, there are two instances of female silence in Shakespeare's play that deserve to be mentioned: the first one is the imposition of silence by the Romans on Tamora as a bounty of war, the second one is the physical silence imposed on Lavinia through the cutting of her tongue.

Thus, female silence can be observed in the character of Lavinia, whose tongue is cut off as well as her hands. She obeys the men around her and only speaks when spoken to without any signs of rebellion. Laura McLure addresses how the silencing of women has been used as a power struggle not only physically (as can be seen in Lavinia's mutilation) but also symbolically (when Titus speaks for Lavinia by accepting her marriage to Saturninus). So McLure affirms: "men effectively silenced women by speaking for them on those occasions when men chose to address significant words to one another in public in order to be able to employ this mode of displaced speech—in order to impersonate women—

without impediment" (5). It is through this symbolic silencing that men continue to control women and re-assert male dominance by excluding women from speech.

In Act I, Lavinia speaks to offer her grief for her fallen brothers, and once more when Titus asks her if she is displeased to marry Saturninus, she replies: "Not I, my lord, sith true nobility/Warrants these words in princely courtesy" (1.1.274-275). Despite being in love and bethroded to Bassianus, Lavinia obeys her father and is willing to marry Saturninus. In Act II, Lavinia speaks again when Bassianus addresses her, and later, when she mocks Tamora in front of Bassianus in the forest. This is the moment where Lavinia speaks the most in the entire tragedy, and she does so to insult another woman, which is allowed for women since in doing so, patriarchy is reaffirmed. However, her scorn is swiftly punished by Tamora and her children when they kill Bassianus and rape her. So Lavinia pleads for her life to Tamora, but she keeps using scornful words: "Ay, come, Semiramis - nay, barbarous Tamora −/For no name fits thy nature but thy own!" (2.3.118-119). Lavinia's words strip Tamora from her femininity and identify her with masculine, even monstrous, characteristics. Lavinia reproches Tamora's lack of mercy, and attempts to use sweet words to convince Chiron and Demetrius:

LAVINIA: O, do not learn her wrath − she taught it thee.

The milk thou suck'dst from her did turn to marble −

Even at thy teat thou hadst thy tyranny.

Yet every mother breeds not sons alike:

Do thou entreat her show a woman's pity. (2.3.144-147)

Lavinia's discourse aims to arouse a sense of pity and remorse from men by evoking heroic traits like pity and thus, taunts her captors into betraying their mother. Unfortunately for Lavinia, her soon to be rapists do not abide to Roman law and have themselves experienced injustice from the same Roman law that Lavinia wishes to use in her favor. Lavinia's words are ignored and mocked by men, similarly to Tamora's when she begged for the life of her son. It is at this moment when Lavinia realizes that her attempts to sway her captors are futile, and instead asks for death to preserve her honor. Finally, Lavinia is physically silenced with the grotesque removal of her tongue to prevent her from revealing the crime performed by Chiron and Demetrius and planned by Aaron who says: "This is the day of doom for Bassianus / His Philomel must lose her tongue to-day,/ Thy sons make pillage of her chastity" (2.3.42-44).

The extent of Lavinia's silence includes the mockery from Chiron and Demetrius who further humiliate her by telling her to speak and wash her hands: "She hath no tongue to call, nor hands to wash;/And so let's leave her to her silent walks" (2.4.7-8). The gruesome imposition of a physical silence on Lavinia reinforces the power struggle between patriarchy and women. Lavinia's silence moves from the symbolic to the physical level. Thus, female silence is forcefully imposed on Titus' daughter not only to prevent her from communicating but also to emphasize her objectification. Hence, patriarchy's violent inscription of male power on Lavinia's body and on her ability to communicate is a statement on how power relations control and force subjects into submission. Consequently, Lavinia suffers a gruesome and violent crime, but since she loses her worth, her suffering is diminished, and her voice and agency are eliminated by men. In sum, Lavinia is silenced and turned into a pariah, deformed, and damaged. Up until this point in the tragedy, Lavinia only spoke fifteen

times, and twelve of those times took place when she humiliated Tamora and when she begged for her life. From here on, the readers are told of Lavinia's suffering through other characters, mostly by Marcus when he finds Lavinia after the assault. Nonetheless, despite the savagery of her rape, Lavinia's suffering is mostly overshadowed by male character's suffering, thus, silencing once more the already silent Lavinia. And silence is also imposed upon Tamora sometimes.

The physical and symbolic silence imposed on Tamora can be observed at the beginning of the play, even though Tamora can physically speak, she is symbolically silenced by the Romans when Titus tells her to restrain her emotions, and he ignores her pleas:

TAMORA: Were piety in thine, it is in these.

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 (1.1.118-123).

Titus tells Tamora to be silent and justifies his actions by using religion and honor as an excuse:

TITUS: These are their brethren, whom your Goths beheld

Alive and dead; and for their brethren slain

> Religiously they ask a sacrifice.
> To this your son is marked; and die he must,
> To appease their groaning shadows that are gone (1.1.125-129)

Titus ignores Tamora's pleas to spare Alarbus' life, so Tamora's words are unheard. Thus, the female voice is ignored from the cultural/public sphere to emphasize the power of decision making given to men. The only voice that is heard is the voice of the patriarch and in this case, Titus speaks for the Romans and asserts Alarbus' fate to die and Tamora's obligation to be silent and comply.

The silencing of women has been historically present "from the beginning of recorded time, [when women] have been excluded from participating in those practices that informed and codified the practice of rhetoric, practices that were, handily enough, labeled rhetoric" (Glenn 19). Therefore, the leading ideology of most of the ancient world "offered women no place in public discourse. The exclusion of women from politics and power was simply one side of that much greater disability—their lack of any right to be heard" (Glenn 19). Thus, the imposition of silence on Tamora by Titus and the Romans obeys a male tradition of power that offers no place for the female voice in order to maintain the female subordination. As a result, Tamora's position as an object is reinforced through the conscious decision of ignoring her words and the imposition of a violent death ritual that she is forced to accept. Nonetheless, following New Historicist approaches that affirm that when there is oppression there is also resistance, in *Titus Andronicus* Tamora represents this resistance by opposing her enemies and using her voice and wits to achieve her goals.

In Act I, after declaring Saturninus the new Emperor, Titus reminds Tamora to be silent and to obey since she is now a slave.Nonetheless, after Titus kills Mutius and the Emperor becomes enraged, Tamora speaks sweet words to Saturninus to appease him and gain his favor by promising to kill Saturninus' enemies, the Andronici. Tamora declares her intentions openly to Saturninus while also convincing him that she can become a powerful ally. Tamora also brags about her new position as Empress of Rome when she tells Titus that she is now a Roman " adopted happily/And must advise the emperor for his good" (1.1.466 -467). It is pertinent to remark that Tamora exhibits two effective strategies in both occasions since she is speaking in the public sphere and using words to taunt and manipulate others. On the first instance, she manipulates Saturninus and affirms that she will get revenge (a male right), while on the second instance she speaks condescendingly to the man who murdered her son.

Additionally, Tamora makes her enemies beg for forgiveness in front of the Romans, thus, humiliating them similarly to how she was humiliated when she begged for Alarbus. So she says: "By my advice, all humbled on your knees,/You shall ask pardon of his majesty" (1.1.475-476). Tamora's words hurt the Andronici's pride and emphasize her newfound status as Empress of Rome. Additionally, Tamora speaks openly to her lover and children and is even able to convince them of doing her bidding with no difficulty. Tamora refuses to be silent and raises her voice, as Cixous asserts when she states that women "will confirm women in a place other than that which is reserved in and by the symbolic, that is, in a place other than silence" (881). Consequently, Tamora asserts her power outside of silence. It is through her speech that she is able to manipulate others and assert her power as a woman.

Tamora not only speaks openly as she became Empress, but she also silences others as can be seen in Act II, when she ignores Lavinia's pleads and urges Titus' daughter to be silent: "I will not hear her speak! Away with her!" (2.3.137). Tamora silences another woman by adopting male oriented behaviors since Tamora engages in a revenge against the Romans. Jenna Fitzgerald asserts that "Masculine identity itself is often shaped by the fear of powerful, rebellious women. Women who do not follow their domesticated, weaker, socially defined roles are considered 'masculine,' as they do not submit to the male-defined concept of 'womanhood'" (24). Thus, Tamora's aggressive masculine behaviors are emphasized by her refusal to remain silent and by her use of speech in order to manifest her agency, "subverting the masculine authority through their [women's] abilities to overthrow and manipulate the dominant paradigm while simultaneously working within it" (Fitzgerald 26). Regarding Tamora's power through speech, Douglas E. Green asserts that Tamora's role is both a threat to and rejection of male hegemony by claiming that: "[e]very desire she voices threatens Titus, Rome, and the patriarchal assumptions of the audience" (qtd. in Fitzgerald 28). In doing so, Tamora manifests her strength, motivation, and dedication, which in turn increase male anxieties, effectively forcing her male enemies to be pushed into a corner. Additionally, Tamora's speech helps identify her as an individual or agent rather than a subordinate self in a patriarchal society.

Patriarchy thrives on controlling women's ability to speak and act, this is why Lavinia and Tamora are subjected to a power struggle between being silent or being vocal of their desires. While Lavinia constantly suppresses her own desires to abide to Roman laws and to fit a patriarchal notion of femininity, Tamora openly expresses her wish to vanquish her enemies and avenge her son. Unfortunately, for both women, silence, as an inescapable force

that seeks to oppress women, is used physically and symbolically upon them throughout the narrative, as a form of control. On one side, Lavinia was raised to comply and remain servile and quiet, but this symbolic silence becomes physical through the removal of her tongue and symbolic once again through the constant disregard of her individual and personal suffering by the men around her. On the other side, Tamora is symbolically silenced by being ignored and physically silenced by means of her murder in the final act. Silence and speech are used by both women as a means of achieving agency or as an acceptance for being controlled by male characters that represent a patriarchal society which fears women's words and their ability to resist the *status quo,*.

Lavinia and Tamora are both considered monstrous, yet, each woman presents a different kind of monstrosity. While Lavinia's monstrosity is inflicted by others and marginalizes her within Rome and her family, Tamora's monstrosity is developed by herself and used to her advantage. Either way, female monstrosity needs to be exterminated by patriarchy in order to protect its own signifying practices and to preserve the *status quo* that benefits the male hegemony. Therefore, women in the age of Shakespeare continued to be treated as inferior to men, as was shown during Christianity and in the re-emergence of classical, Greek and Roman texts. In the Renaissance, Christian writers perpetuated misogyny through their texts encouraging men to be wary of women as well as their voices and sexuality. Thus, Shakespeare constructed the characters of Lavinia and Tamora based on stereotypical notions of femininity that exemplify what an ideal woman should be, represented by Lavinia, and that depict what a woman should avoid becoming, represented by Tamora.

As a result, Lavinia's body and will are horrifyingly brutalized and mutilated and yet,

her suffering becomes secondary when compared to her father's shame and humiliation after learning that her daughter's beauty and chastity are destroyed. Lavinia is victimized and re-victimized by men in the play, and she loses her agency along with her beauty due to her mutilation. Lavinia's individual tragedy has broader repercussions for the Roman Empire that, as Lavinia's body, is also fragmented, violated, and abused. But, while Lavinia is transformed into a martyr and a victim, Tamora is described as a strong, vengeful and cunning female, traits that are usually not conferred upon women. For Tamora to become powerful enough to stand against Titus, she has to renounce the female roles imposed on her gender and adopt male behaviors. To do this, Tamora, married to the Roman Emperor uses her speech and her sexuality to manipulate male "Others." Her oversexualization, depicted through her adulterous attitude, is used as a driving force for her demise, since she gave birth to a bastard son and could be exposed to the Emperor for this adulterous act. Nonetheless, Tamora swiftly uses her wits to punish her enemies. At the beginning, presented as a defenseless mother begging for her son's life, Tamora transforms into a ruthless avenger. Her divergent personality and characteristics become a double edge sword that will be used to justify her murder and the denial of her funeral rights. Roman men compare Tamora to beasts as a means of erasing her humanity and thus, justifying her demise without any moral implications.

In sum, Shakespearean women in *Titus Andronicus* are either submissive, docile, silent, and helpless as Lavinia or considered to be monstrous by adopting active and aggressive male-oriented behaviors as Tamora. Either way, no woman is safe from the patriarchal hegemony which dictates that women need to be subordinated or eliminated, so that social order can be restored. For this patriarchal order, women should be reduced to their

biological function, that is, to be mothers and to have a servile position as daughters, sisters, and wives. While men retained their superiority along with their sex, women were reduced to second class citizens or in some cases, even less than that. The struggle between power relations among men and women drives Tamora to adopt violent and male oriented actions in the play in order to access the same power of her enemies. Consequently, she is punished. From this patriarchal posture, one would expect that women who did the opposite should be spared, but Lavinia's body and suffering prove otherwise. It appears as if women are doomed to be discarded as a commodity or as an obstacle by the hegemony which deems their worth. As human beings, women's suffering is diminished, their bodies are violated, their voices are physically and symbolically silenced, and their actions are considered monstrous. As a result, women are punished, abused, tortured, and murdered even if they choose to comply like Lavinia, or if they choose to rebel like Tamora. As Sor Juana Inés affirms in her *Redondillas*, exposing a double standard: "you foolish men that accuse/women, without a reason/ without seeing that you're to blame/ of the same thing you accuse," so there is no way out for women, no matter what they do, they will ultimately be blamed and punished.

The next chapter, chapter IV, will contrast the differences in perception and judgement between male and female vengeance by analyzing Tamora's revenge and Titus' revenge along with similar retaliations committed by other male and female characters from the ancient world. This coming analysis aims to shed light on how society perceives vengeance differently based on gender perspectives, and how women are punished more severely than men for taking revenge, exhibiting once again a clear double standard in literature that exists in society.

Chapter IV: The Influence of Patriarchy in *Titus Andronicus:* Paternal and Maternal Revenge

Patriarchy, as a hegemonic ideology, controls people's lives. Consequently, women have suffered under the laws of such a society that constantly subdues them while at the same time, rewards men. The role that patriarchy plays in *Titus Andronicus* is essential when considering how the actions that Tamora performs to mimic Titus' violent acts are judged differently and negatively because she is a woman. While Tamora pursues her revenge to avenge her son Alarbus, the male characters constantly reproach her behavior and treat her as a beast and a monster. Unlike Tamora's, Titus' actions are always praised or justified since his role as a respected warrior and father gives him the authority to act as he pleases. Although both characters take their own revenge, their actions are judged differently, and the result of each revenge changes based on the sex of the perpetrator.

This final chapter will analyze the paternal and maternal revenge of Titus and Tamora respectively. The reasons for their revenge, strategies used to achieve their revenge, and examples of similar revenges in classical texts will be exposed. Thus, the study of paternal revenge and maternal revenge will show the differences that society places on male and female behaviors and how the context, based on gender differences and social expectations, affects the judgment placed on Titus and Tamora. It is important to clarify that this chapter will emphasize on maternal revenge in order to expand the topic of female monstrous representations. But first, let us explore the term revenge.

According to the *Dictionary of Word Origins,* the word "revenge" comes from the word *vindicate* that comes from the latin word *vindex*: "meant 'claimant, defender, avenger.' From it was derived *vindicare* 'claim, defen, revenge,' which gave English *vindicate*, as well

as (via French) *avenge* [14] *revenge* [14], and *vengeance*" (Ayto 559). In addition, Ronald Broude traces the origin and role of the concept of revenge in Elizabethan England, and so he affirms:

> In modern usage, the noun revenge, according to the *American College Dictionary*, denotes "retaliation for injuries or wrongs." Unlike retribution, which "suggests just or deserved punishment, often without personal motives," revenge has a distinctly personal cast, implying "the carrying out of a bitter desire to injure another for a wrong done to oneself or to those who seem a part of oneself." (38).

Thus, the overall perception about revenge encompasses actions of retribution with the intent to punish wrong doers and defend an individual's honor and pride against said wrong doers who either hurt him/her or people close to them.

Revenge in Early Modern England and Roman society was accepted, although it was more publicly accepted in the Ancient World due to the influence of Christianity. According to Ronal Broude, "divine revenge" was justified because it was considered a means to fulfill God's law. This kind of revenge included crimes against the divine law, meaning, any acts that were not considered "Christian" according to the Bible such as murder, heresy, and even adultery. The ambiguity in this statement allowed people to take revenge in their own hands, so institutions were established to mediate most conflicts and thus avoid clandestine revenge that did not give the Crown any monetary benefit. Blood and family disputes were allowed but regulated by the institutions. Likewise, regulated revenge reaffirmed the authority of the king and his magistrates by making them agents of this act. However, revenge was still attributed to men as the biblical passages spoke only of men who fulfilled the divine law and legal documents were based on what the Bible said. Thus, in the Ancient Greek World as well as in the Early Modern Age, revenge as a public action belonged to men while women

had to give up vindictive actions and submit to the sphere of home and family. In sum, revenge was reserved for men, while women who incurred in revenge were transgressing the female established limits and roles. While the man who executed a revenge was considered a hero, the woman who took on revenge was considered a monster.

In literature, revenge tragedies became popular within the Elizabethan society after the publication of Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy.* Although, the genre of revenge tragedies became popular at that time, the motif of revenge had long been present in the theater in England. Bradley J. Irish asserts: "Before revenge came to inhabit its own generic space, it functioned as a widely versatile thematic and dramaturgical element in countless plays, ranging from raucous comedies to stately classical histories" (118). Consequently, Kyd's play aforementioned "intensified and systematized structurally a theme that had for decades already been a well-worn mainstay on the English stage" (Irish 118). The central theme of revenge tragedies presents an individual who "conceives himself to have been seriously wronged, and who, overcoming obstacles both within and outside himself, contrives eventually to exact retribution, becoming in the process as depraved as those by whom he has been wronged" (Broude 38). According to Ronald Borude, Elizabethans' views on revenge varied from being acceptable forms of maintaining one's honor to being reproached as forms of barbaric violence. However, Broude concludes: "Several recent studies of individual revenge plays have stressed the concern of these works with the operation of divine retribution and the ways in which various forms of human retribution are turned by Providence to the purposes of God's justice" (39). Therefore, the role of divine justice would sometimes be used to justify the search of retribution, but this did not mean that every action was justified by the audience.

Although the emotional elements of revenge could convince an audience to sympathize with a revenger, the audience did not necessarily approve the actions committed by the avenger. Murder, adultery, and honor were common motifs of revenge, honor being the prime concern for revenge. In addition, Phillip Ayres asserts that "Elizabethans were reading of revengers whose actions were condoned by the authors and of whom the reader was often encouraged to approve" (474). Thus, the perception of revenge in Shakespeare's time was that of an action that could be justified on stage as a way of searching for justice, but outside the stage it was not condoned. In modern times, revenge is generally perceived as immoral and ethically wrong; thus, it is punished as a crime when it involves harm to others. Nonetheless, as stated by Ayres, Elizabethans found revenge to be cathartic at the hands of the hero, as can be seen in *Titus Andronicus* where Titus' actions are beneficial to the Empire and are even rewarded.

4.1 Revenge in William Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*

The act of revenge plays the central role in Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*, a play where a mother and a father engage in vindictive acts with the purpose of avenging either members of their families or their pride. To better understand the effects of revenge in the play, it is imperative to point out the motives, actions, and repercussions of revenge for the characters in the play.

Revenge in *Titus Andronicus* presents different motives and involves different characters, yet, the audiences are encouraged to celebrate one act of revenge over the other. As far as motives go, Titus and Tamora present different motives for their relentless search of retribution. On the one hand, Titus uses revenge to assert his dominance and recover his

pride after being attacked by the Goths. Tamora, on the other hand, seeks revenge to avenge the death of her son in a ritualistic murder performed by Titus and his progeny, despite her maternal pleas for mercy. While Tamora's revenge appears to be selfless since she seeks to assert her son's grievability; Titus' revenge is selfish based on his desire to restore his honor rather than protecting his family.

The difference in motives should help audiences sympathize with Tamora; nonetheless, the audiences are encouraged by the characters of the play to sympathize with Titus by presenting him as a suffering father and warrior betrayed by Rome (based on his own twisted perceptions of justice and loyalty). Tamora, even though she is a grieving mother, is presented as a ruthless barbarian who lusts after revenge. In other words, the audience reproaches her revenge and favor the image of Titus as a fallen hero who seeks to save Rome from the monstrous invasion of Tamora and her progeny, as will be seen later on in this chapter. Consequently, Titus personifies the transindividual subject that is permeated by his society's expectations and frames, which represents Greenblatt's notion of self-fashioning. Greenblatt in *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* identifies the act of self-fashioning *per se* as an act of submission to an absolute power; thus it is "achieved in relation to something perceived as alien, strange, or hostile: the 'threatening Other-heretic, savage, witch, adulteress, traitor, antichrist . . .' "(9). This "alien" entity must be punished, attacked, and destroyed so that the hegemony can prevail. Tamora and her children represent the alien entity that Titus, an individual that has been self-fashioned by the Roman Empire, must destroy. The actions taken by both characters constitute violent and macabre behaviors that include murder, conspiracy, rape, mutilation, regicide, and cannibalism. Each of these actions is carried out in cunning and gruesome ways that destabilize Rome's social and political stability since the victims are part of the nobility. But Titus is often justified by his family

and the Romans since his actions are perceived as a search for justice, as is shown when Marcus justifies Titus' killing of Tamora, Saturninus, and Lavinia:

MARCUS: Now judge what cause had Titus to revenge
These wrongs unspeakable, past patience,
Or more than any living man could bear.
Now have you heard the truth, what say you,
Romans? (5.3.124-127)

However, when Tamora engages in her revenge, her actions are exclusively judged as barbaric, violent, and monstrous because of her different ethnic origin and her gender as a woman: "Her life was beast-like, devoid of piety/ and, being so, shall have like want of pity (5.3.194-199) ". Consequently, Tamora is compared to a beast that does not deserve pity from anyone as a result of her actions against the Andronici.

Nonetheless, the actions from both characters will have a deep impact on Rome since their acts of revenge target noble families and powerful individuals. On one hand, Titus' revenge will culminate with the death of his enemies, as well as the murder of the Roman Emperor and his own death. In fact, by killing the Emperor, Titus ends Saturninus' empire which allows for his son Lucius to take the throne and bring order to Rome. Despite having committed gruesome acts of revenge that involved the murder of his son Mutius, of his daughter Lavinia, of the Roman Emperor, and of the Goths including Alarbus, Chiron, Demetrius, and Tamora, Titus is rewarded by Roman society by putting his surviving son, Lucius, on the Roman throne. On the other hand, Tamora's revenge drives political turmoil through Rome and indirectly leads to the murder of the Emperor at the hands of Titus. as can be seen in the last act of the play during the gruesome banquet. Additionally, through her revenge, Tamora is able to blame and kill two of Titus' sons and mutilate and dishonor his

daughter. It is important to point out that Tamora is also the reason why the Emperor kills Titus since the latter killed Tamora, the Emperor's wife. This double cycle of revenge in *Titus Andronicus* helps to show the difference in perception when contrasting and comparing male revenge against female revenge in a patriarchal society that openly favors male over female actions. But let us analyze in more detail each of these acts of reveng.

4.2 Paternal Revenge: Titus' Search for Retribution

According to a patriarchal society and as shown in Shakespeare's play, revenge constitutes a right for men who have been wronged. It is also considered as a part of a man's responsibility to take revenge when necessary, and the law will protect him. Titus Andronicus, for example, is a renowned war general who has enough power and influence to manipulate his fellow citizens, the Romans. As a transindividual subject, Titus represents the Roman values of honor, nobility, and civility; thus, Titus holds a position of power that is inaccessible to his enemies. Even though he is introduced as a part of a group that is considered as "civilized," his path to revenge will transform his notions of justice and civility. Hence, being hurt by the Goths, Titus embarks on a cycle of revenge that will also result in his own death.

Titus' revenge begins in Act I when he decides that Alarbus, the Goth warrior, must die to appease the souls of Titus' dead sons. Here Titus uses Roman Law and religious beliefs to justify his actions. As a Roman patriarch and general, Titus is able to use the law to his advantage and is supported by an Empire that values honor and virility. Therefore, Titus' actions portray Roman patriarchal ideals that protect and favor men. In fact, Titus' search for revenge reveals a legally-encoded violence in the Roman system that portrays his hegemonic

masculinity[21] but justifies his actions. Male revenge has been a constant since the Ancient World where men were applauded for protecting their honor and pride at any cost. Consequently, male revenge appears to be more permissive than female revenge as can also be observed in the myth of Atreus when comparing Titus' revenge with Atreus' revenge.

4.2.1 Titus' and Atreus' Cannibalism as Parallel Forms of Paternal Revenge

Atreus' myth, referenced in the *Oresteia* by Aeschylus, parallels Titus' vengeance in its execution and breaking of taboos, as will be shown as follows. Atreus was the son of Pelops and Hippodamia, descendants of the house of Atreus. Atreus had vowed to sacrifice a lamb to the goddess Artemis but instead, he gave it to his wife who was having an affair with his brother. Aerope, Atreus' wife, gives the lamb to Thyestes, Atreus' brother, who later deceives Atreus into betting the throne on whomever had the lamb. Consequently, Thyestes, already having the lamb, wins. Atreus then learns of his wife's adultery and kills Thyestes' sons. He cooks them and serves them to Thyestes to later taunt him with the hands and feet of his dead children. After this act, Thyestes is exiled for eating the flesh of humans. Consequently, Atreus regains the throne. Later on, Thyestes is told by an oracle to have a son with his own daughter, and so the child would later kill Atreus. Thyestes' daughter abandons the baby because of the incestuous act, and the baby is found by a shepherd who gives the child to Atreus and his wife. After the child reaches adulthood, he learns the truth about Atreus, and he decides to kill him.

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[21] According to Evans and Williams the term "hegemonic masculinity" is defined as "the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women" (154).

Atreus kills his brother's progeny and feeds them to Thyestes, just as Titus' kills and cooks Tamora's remaining sons and feeds them to Tamora and Saturninus. In both texts, the action is not perceived as monstrous by the perpetrators. Atreus regains his kingdom and is able to live happily for many years before being killed by his adoptive son, while Titus achieves his revenge at the cost of his life. Nonetheless, Titus is remembered as a hero and savior of Rome for killing the Goths. Interestingly enough, the act of murdering other people's children, cooking them, and serving them to their parents appears to be of little concern when it comes to judgements. As fathers in search of revenge, their crimes are forgiven, and as men, their crimes are justified under the guise of honor and justice.

In Shakespeare's play, Titus escalates the already gruesome cycle of revenge by forcing Tamora to engage in an incestuous form of cannibalism. He makes Tamora ingest her sons during the final banquet; thus, Titus fulfills his revenge. Echoing Gregg's words, the escalation of violence in *Titus Andronicus* is related to the increase in anger where threats are fulfilled and violently performed by Titus. By forcing Tamora into eating her own children, Titus not only makes Tamora break the taboo of cannibalism, but also makes her involve in a form of incest by ingesting her sons. Discussing cannibalism Louise Noble declares:

> Different perceptions of the eating of human flesh by humans are constituted and regulated within distinct orders of discourse. By constructing medicinal cannibalism as a desirable practice, early modern medical discourse offers a complex understanding of what it means for one human to eat the body of another; this is at odds with discourses of cannibalism circulating in the period which repudiate such practices as abhorrent and taboo (qtd. in Gregg 678).

As such, there is a dichotomy resulting from the perceptions of cannibalism as having the potential for cleansing. In addition, Gregg states that "the convergence of a cannibalistic and medicinal discourse sheds an entirely new light on Titus' decision to enact his revenge by feeding Tamora her sons; [while] Noble suggests that it is in fact a strategy for curing the body politic of the patriarchal disorder that Rome finds itself infected by" (10). This action carried on by Titus is then perceived as a form of cleansing for the political body of Rome. As a result, by making Tamora ingest her spawns and then killing her, Titus is restating order by punishing evildoers and destroying the source of evil (Tamora's womb), as well. So he declares:

> TITUS: Hark, villains, I will grind your bones to dust,
> And with your blood I'll make a paste;
> And of the paste a coffin I will rear,
> And make two pasties of your shameful heads;
> And bid that strumpet, your unhallowed dam,
> Like to the earth, swallow her own increase. (5.2.186-192)

The words "like to the earth" and "swallow her own increase" reinforce Titus' notions that by returning Demetrius and Chiron to Tamora, he is eradicating all evils and his actions are therefore justified. Thus, Titus uses the legally encoded violence that allows him to take revenge in order to regain his pride.

The gruesome and disturbing acts of violence that Titus commits depict a savage patriarchal Roman society that encourages its male citizens to take on revenge. Titus transforms himself from the civilized Roman to a savage Other; nonetheless, he continues to

maintain his power throughout the play due to his own social standing and his role of a man in Rome. As a result of self-fashioning himself after his hegemonic culture, Titus harnesses enough power to defy Rome while still receiving empathy from the audience and his society. It is because of these two elements, his social position and gender, that despite his gruesome acts of revenge, Titus is still considered a hero towards the end of the play.

> Titus sees the murder of Chiron, Demetrius, Tamora and Lavinia as actions that will restore Rome to a normality that was initially disrupted by the appropriation of violent Roman strategies by Tamora and the Goths. The 'licensed killing,' a privilege initially reserved exclusively for Roman rituals, is a strategy taken up by Tamora as being the most effective method of communication in a play saturated with discursive violence (11).

In sum, Roman law protects and justifies Titus' actions while condemning Tamora's. Titus can freely exercise his revenge and be praised for it, while Tamora is scorned and murdered for taking revenge for her family. Thus, Tamora's role as a mother becomes monstrous when she deviates from feminine behaviors, while Titus' role as a patriarch is praised as he commits gruesome murders and breaks taboos since the law and his society protect him.

The image of the father cooking other people's progeny is not new, as can be seen in the Myth of Atreus. Titus' revenge and Atreus' are very similar not only in their execution, but also in the result of their actions. Male revenge, as portrayed by Titus and Atreus, is judged, rewarded and regarded as necessary. Hence, according to societal norms based on patriarchal notions, as will be shown as follows, paternal revenge is heroic and noble, while maternal revenge is ruthless and monstrous.

4.2.2 Legally-encoded violence and Madness as Resources for Revenge

Titus Andronicus exemplifies patriarchal notions of ownership and power by means of his actions which depict a tyrannical father, a barbarian, and a twisted mind willing to break taboos. However, Titus' actions are only possible because the Roman system allows them and protects Titus most of the time. In fact, the Roman men in the play make constant use of their judicial system to justify bloody actions and perpetuate their authority. As a consequence of a patriarchal and unfair system, laws are constantly against female characters and in favor of male characters who have the power and resources to overtake their enemies. Steven Gregg asserts that "Shakespeare's intense focus on violence in the play forces the audience to consider them [these violent actions] in unusual modes; rather than simply being destructive acts, violence appears to have a curative quality, eventually restoring the order so desired by the Romans" (1). By encoding violence into the Roman system, Shakespeare allows his male characters to use uncivilized methods to obtain what they want while still being considered as good rather than monstrous as Tamora and her progeny. Violence, as an encoded element in Shakespeare's text, helps to identify society's anxieties towards the Other and society's attempt to subdue the Other.

As mentioned before, *Titus Andronicus* depicts a violent clash between the Romans, a civilized culture, and the Goths, an "uncivilized" culture; and this same clash presents a Roman Empire that aspires for order and stability while allowing violence and injustice. The Goths represent the savage Other and the oppressed group that turned them into captives of war, while the Romans, the hegemonic group, are the conquerors and the oppressors who strive to maintain their power. From this perspective, Molly Smith asserts:

The myth of the Other is more violent and horrible than the Self that Titusinitially

> exploits and then completely deconstructs [. . .] Indeed, Titus begins by asserting polarities, proceeds to undermine them by collapsing boundaries that separated Self from Other, and yet concludes with an attempted reiteration of those very polarities that had proved so fragile (qtd. in Gregg 1).

Even though Titus proclaims Rome as a civilized society, the sacrificial rites performed on Alarbus undermine this notion of being "civilized" by showing how the Romans adopt "barbarian" actions to satisfy their need for revenge. This binarism of "civilized vs barbarian" is clearly depicted through the Andronici and the Goths; two forces that are constantly confronted in a struggle for power and revenge, and whose levels of barbarism can be exchangeable according to the context.

The Roman Empire of Shakespeare's text uses systemic violence that protects its male citizens by using legal discourse that grants them the power to do as they please to others who are outside of the hegemonic group. The first form of legally-encoded violence can be traced back to the use of the term "barbarian" to identify "the Other" while positioning themselves as "the Self" and justifying the use of a physical and symbolic violence (forms of violence that are normalized, such as insults and derogatory practices) to control the others. When referring to power, Judith Butler declares: "Juridical notions of power appear to regulate political life in purely negative terms – that is, through the limitation, prohibition, regulation, control and even 'protection' of individuals related to that political structure through the contingent and retractable operation of choice" (2). Consequently, the hegemonic system not only has the power to assess what is admissible and what is not, but it also has the power to assert which lives are grievable and which lives are not. Through the existence of this hegemonic system, Titus and his family are able to slaughter and humiliate the Goths while still maintaining their honor and their status of being "civilized."

As mentioned before, Titus is introduced as a wise and powerful Roman general who is favoured by the Empire. However, as the play progresses the audience is able to see how Titus engages in a series of violent murders and barbaric actions. The first act that portrays Titus' violent nature is the murder of Alarbus and his use of Roman law to justify this revenge against his enemies:

> TITUS: Alive and dead, and for their brethren slain,
>
> Religiously they ask a sacrifice.
>
> To this, your son is marked, and die he must,
>
> T'appease their groaning shadows that are gone. (1.1.124-129)

The sacrifice of Alarbus starts the double cycle of revenge between Titus and Tamora, to which Barker suggests: "[o]ne would hardly need look further for evidence of a typically primitive account of the sacred incarnate in a material indeed corporeal ritual of sacrificial propitiation of the unseen spirits of the dead" (145). The justification of a religious ritual that involves a macabre sacrifice exemplifies the power that Titus holds as a Roman man. At this point, Titus' actions seem contradictory for a civilized man. Even the Goths denounce this act as been barbaric, thus, reverting the roles between civilized/ barbarian:

> TAMORA: O cruel, irreligiouspiety!
>
> CHIRON: Was ever Scythia half so *barbarous*!
>
> DEMETRIUS: Oppose not Scythia to ambitious Rome (1.1.133-135, emphasis added)

According to Zizek's theory of power, Titus' order to sacrifice Alarbus is a form of systemic violence that even though it provides revenge to the winner, it has a devastating impact on Tamora and her remaining children. The trauma from the macabre sacrifice will fuel their hatred and desire for revenge against Rome, thus, establishing Titus' first legally- encoded

violent behavior, but there are others as well.

Moreover, Titus' troubled masculinity is exemplified through the act or murdering his son Mutius for disobeying him in public.

TITUS: What, villain boy!

Barr'st me my way in Rome?

[Stabbing MUTIUS] (1.1.294-295)

Even his son Lucius reproaches the actions of his father and calls him unjust:

LUCIUS: My lord, you are unjust; and more than so:

In wrongful quarrel you have slain your son (1.1.297-298).

Titus claims Mutius' life in filicide and justifies it by stating that as father he has the right to decide over his progeny's life. This notion is also supported by Roman law. However, Gregg warns the audience: "The collapse into one another of easily identifiable categories of violence signals the highly problematic and political nature of violence in the play; the loss of jurisdiction occurs when political violence becomes personalized, and personal violence politicized" (6). Titus murders a Roman citizen, but the law protects him because Mutius is his son; nonetheless, Titus' remaining progeny disagree with their father's impulsive reaction. Therefore, Titus' actions appear barbaric to the eyes of the Goths since so far, he has murdered Alarbus and Mutius, his son, in order to assert his masculinity and sovereignty over others as the patriarch of the Andronici. Commenting on Roman actions, Baker asserts:

> This impression [of barbarism] persists in the host of related, accessory ways in which the text not only displays the beliefs and practices of the ancient culture but displays them as 'marked' behaviours in a manner which signifies its primitive character, [in] such large scale practices as the habit of enslaving captives taken in war (qtd. in Gregg 143).

So Titus' power is supported by a state-sanctioned violence that protects its citizens and allows revenge. Nonetheless, this right of executing revenge is exclusively for male Roman citizens. Tamora, the Goth, is punished for imitating Titus' violent behaviors. From this perspective, Smith asserts:

> In a reciprocal representation of alterity, the play dramatizes the irony and falseness of the Self-Other binary most vividly in this opening scene as Tamora and her sons, seen by the Romans as barbaric and violent, in turn decry the Roman spectacle of retaliation and vengeance as primitive and inhuman (qtd. in Gregg 316).

While the Romans call the Goths barbaric, for the Goths the Romans behave savagely and live in a violent society where death and blood are intrinsically connected to the laws. Titus as a patriarch has the right to decide over his children and dictate their lives and deaths as he does with Mutius and Lavinia. Titus uses gruesome methods to uphold his power and his pride even at the cost of the lives of his progeny, thus exemplifying his troubled masculinity that results from a patriarchal hegemony.

Titus Andronicus uses several strategies to obtain his revenge, but the most successful is his feigned madness to deceive Tamora and her children. Consequently, madness becomes a resource that is used to justify Titus' gruesome behaviors. Although the work of Bahktin and Foucault regarding madness aim to prove how sometimes madmen could be used as a literary device to challenge authorities and provide knowledge, Titus instead uses his false madness to justify violence. In *Distracted Subjects: Madness and Gender in Shakespeare and Early Modern Culture*, Carol Thomas, affirms that "discourses of madness flourished due to their usefulness in reconceptualizing the boundaries between natural and supernatural, masculinity and femininity, body and mind, feigned and actual distraction" (2). In addition, madness and its usefulness depend on gender as well. Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubaralready

analyzed the role of the madwoman as a negative form of female stereotype. But even when madness is bestowed on a male character, he becomes a source of knowledge or a pitiful individual rather than a negative being. So Titus pretends to be mad to trick Tamora and her progeny into falling in his trap:

> TITUS: [Aside] I knew them all, though they suppose me mad,
>
> And will o'er reach them in their own devices −
>
> A pair of cursed hell-hounds and their dam! (5.2.142-144)

As a result, Titus' false madness makes his enemies lower their guards and be tricked into their deaths. In addition, Titus' false insanity is a recurrent element in Shakespeare's plays as Thomas indicates when she asserts that "Shakespeare's plays provide the most numerous, extensive, and richest representations of distracted subjects[22]" (7). The author argues that male malady is often represented as high and heroic in contrast to female malady that is either overlooked or categorized as inferior and negative. Consequently, much like revenge, madness is also judged based on the person's sex. As such, Titus' madness becomes part of a "heroic" strategy that helps Titus regain his honor and emphasize his wits. In sum, madness and revenge are used by patriarchy in its favor while, at the same time, these are denied or misjudged in women who are either vindicated or punished.

4.3 Maternal Revenge: Tamora's Search for Justice

According to the same patriarchal society that allows men to take revenge, female revenge is forbidden as it contradicts ideal female behavior. While Titus is allowed to avenge his sons, Tamora, as a mother, is denied the same rights and is expected to grieve in silence.

[22] Term used by Carol Thomas to define subjects that were considered mad or crazy.

Mothers tend to be depicted as peaceful, caring, loving, and tender; therefore, a mother who conspires, manipulates, and kills, is perceived as evil and dangerous. Consequently, when a mother seeks revenge for her children, she is not judged in the same manner a father is, since fathers are considered heroic in their search for vengeance. Then, gender plays an essential role in judging which revenge is morally correct and which one is not. Maternal revenge is portrayed negatively since it depicts women as being a threat to others instead of being a nurturing figure. As such, maternal revenge is not justified by a patriarchal society that rewards men for seeking revenge. On the contrary, revenge is forbidden for mothers, and any woman who engages in revenge is punished and identified with the archetype of the Terrible Mother.

Tamora's revenge starts in Act I when she accepts Saturninus' proposal to become his wife, and so she becomes Empress of Rome. After witnessing the murder of her son Alarbus, Tamora vows to take revenge on her enemies to avenge her son and assert his grievability. As an avenger and a mother, Tamora will follow the footsteps of the Troyan Queen, Hecuba, who also sought revenge for her children and in doing so, disrupted male order in her society. As a result, Tamora's maternal revenge is scrutinized by patriarchal views that consider that Tamora's actions as monstrous.

4.3.1 Motherhood and Society

Society creates images of female monstrosity through the use of stereotypes that frame women: "Since Eve, women have been defined by and from men, male-engendered female figures. There are two moral extremes, the angel and the monster, that is why there are two different symbols, the subversive and the symbols of female transcendence" (Gilbert

&Gubar 19). Women then are denied the possibility to affirm themselves as subjects, they represent the Other that society tends to fear and reject. Nancy Spero links sexual violence with war violence because within the war, female bodies are reduced to objects of conquest, pleasure and humiliation by all opposing sides (Dolors 15). However, the Trojan Queen and the Queen of the Goths refuse to accept the aggression of the male collective and lash out at their captors and those who robbed them off their progeny. Women and their potential to become monsters reflect male dread of the angel-demon [dichotomy] that threatens male order.

Motherhood is a part of the female collective which has been historically portrayed in two extremes, the archetype of the Good mother and the Terrible mother. A good mother protects and cares for her children, and she should accept their deaths with dignity and silence. On one hand, a good mother must possess: "[the] 'eternal feminine' virtues of modesty, gracefulness, purity, delicacy, civility, compliancy, reticence, chastity, affability, politeness . . ." (Gilbert &Gubar 23). On the other hand, a bad mother is the one who harms her children or that engages in violent acts either against them or to protect them, such as the figures of Tamora and Hecabe, and so many other women in literature who engage in these acts. Gilda Pacheco in her article "From Clytemnestra to Christine Mannon: Villainesses or Avengers?" it is observable how revenge at the hands of women becomes monstrous even if they take revenge to avenge their progeny as is the case of Clytemmnestra. Even the two female characters analyzed by the author are conditioned by their societies since "Their thoughts and actions are usually criticized since they will be depicted and conditioned by the perceptions of two male writers who belong to patriarchal societies of their respective epochs (Pacheco 59)." From her perspective, DymphaCallighan affirms that women were persecuted as mothers: as bad mothers for witchcraft, and as bad mothers for infanticide.Hence,

stereotyped images of mothers are used to support dichotomous ideology of adoration and contempt for mothers. Therefore, this differentiation of gender and images of positive and negative female ideals, affects how male revenge and female revenge are perceived. Negative and dangerous images of strong women are abundant in literature as can also be observed in classical texts that are referenced in *Titus Andronicus*. In the case of Tamora, she searches for revenge as a mother, and is judged differently than Titus because of her gender and social expectations of womanhood and motherhood. Consequently, motherhood becomes a stigma and a source of rejection when it goes against the established model of patriarchy.

Motherhood and monstrosity have been linked together by patriarchal notions were the female body becomes a battleground, and women's change of appearance during pregnancy is seen as an excess, a transgression and a source of anxiety. Mothers could be either angels or monsters, for their actions are carefully scrutinized to punish any sign of rebellion and defiance against the male norm. Because of this, Tamora's actions are monstrous as a result of her search for revenge and her refusal to accept Alarbus' death and remain a *mater dolorosa* or a grieving mother. Instead, she pursues violent actions to punish noble men in Roman society. Nonetheless, the perception of revenge will vary depending on the individual's gender as can be seen when comparing Titus' revenge with Tamora's revenge which is similarly depicted in some other texts.

4.3.2 Tamora and Hecuba as Parallel Models of Maternal Revenge

Maternal revenge constitutes a literary motif that can be observed since the ancient world. Strong women who take revenge for their family become an example of female monstrosity when their revenge goes against patriarchal standards. For example, in *Hecuba*

by Euripides the story centers on the Queen of Troy who has become a slave after the Greeks were victorious in their fight against the Trojans. When the Greek take the city of Troy, they take the queen Hecuba and her two daughters, Clitemnestra and Polixena as war spoils. Hecuba's husband, king Priam, and his son Hector were killed during the conflict while their son Polidoro is betrayed by the king of Thrace, Polimestor. At the beginning of the tragedy, the ghost of Polidoro warns his mother that his sister Polixena will be sacrificed. Polidoro laments the misfortunes of her mother who has lost her children, her husband and her royal title. Hecuba is then announced that her daughter Polixena will serve as a sacrifice for the Greek hero Achilles. When her daughter's sacrifice is confirmed, Hecuba begs Odysseus to save her daughter from the sacrifice. Thus, the grieving mother tries to convince him to listen to her pleas, but Odysseus mocks her. Hecuba tries to appeal to heroic values, but these values do not seem to apply to women in Greek society. As a result, Hecuba can only observe how her daughter is taken from her just as her husband and children were. By losing her son and her husband, she has been stripped of any power and identity as the Greek remind her: "Madam, you are lost and you no longer exist, even if you look at the light, without children, without a husband, without a city, completely destroyed" (Euripides, *Hecuba*, vv 668). When she sees her murdered son, she affirms: I have lost myself, unfortunate me! and I no longer exist" (Euripides, Hecuba, Vv683-684). Even the Queen recognizes the loss of her identity through the loss of her children and husband. Her role as a wife and mother are nullified and so, she loses her identity from a social perspective.

As a woman, Hecuba has lost everything, and her life is now devoid of any worth. After Polixena's sacrifice, the death of her son Polidoro is confirmed to the old woman. Seeing herself humiliated, defeated and alone, Hecuba decides to take revenge against those responsible for her misfortune. It is at this point that Hecuba transgresses the norms by

adopting a masculine code in a society where revenge belongs to the male. Hecuba changes her image of *mater dolorosa* to become a relentless retaliator. After hearing about the betrayal of King Polimestor who murders her son, Hecuba goes to Agamemnon in order to persuade him and convince him to summon Polimestor to where Hecuba is by misguiding Agamenon into thinking that she is a helpless grieving old woman. Once Polimestor is called to Hecuba's tent, with the help of the Trojan women, Hecuba kills Polimestor's children in front of him and then blinds him to complete her revenge. Hecuba's story depicts the role of women in war since they become objects for men to use and misuse as they see fit. Nonetheless, there are women like Hecuba and Tamora who refuse to remain silent and rebel against those who wronged them.

The identity of women is tied to men and, within war conflicts, their destiny is intertwined to that of the men surround them. Hence, women's position as the Other, in the words of deBeauvoir, corresponds to the alterity. Throughout history, women have been subordinated to men, their otherness is presented as absolute. Hecuba uses traditional notions of femininity to deceive the Greek and convince them of helping her achieve her goal. Hecuba constructs her own femininity to trick men and obtain her revenge, consequently, being branded as monstrous. Thus, the construction of femininity and masculinity contributed to the creation of the otherness of women because they occupy a secondary role in society. In fact, male power submits women since "the woman does not claim herself as a subject, because she lacks concrete means to do so, because she lives the necessary bond that ties her to the man without considering a reciprocity, and because she is often pleased in her otherness" (deBeauvoir 55). Through the institutions, women have been subordinated to men both socially and legally. Therefore, at the moment in which the woman accepts her passivity,

she implicitly accepts the suffering without resistance of the imposition of the norms that are forced on her by the male collective.

In the tragedies that are being analyzed, both Hecuba and Tamora have lost their children to their captors. Their position as a woman / object makes them passive subjects whose discourse is delegitimized and mocked. In the tragedy of Euripides, Hecuba begs Odysseus for her daughter: "I beg you: do not separate my daughter from my arms, nor kill her. Enough with those who are dead. With her I am happy and I forget my misfortunes" (455, 274-280). Similarly, Tamora begs Titus for Alarbus' life, but she is also ignored and told to be silent. As has been exemplified, the role of women places them in a secondary position devoid of power and they must silently obey and submit to the patriarchs who rule their fate.

Both Hecuba and Tamora suffer similar attacks and losses, and so both women decide to retaliate through means of their cunning speech and by pretending to be helpless and weak. These women, as the threatening Other, try to resist the monarchical power that abuses and controls them. As a result, they are punished for their acts and deemed as monstrous. Like Hecuba, Tamora loses her rights and privileges with the death of her husband and becomes a captive of war. As a slave, Tamora has no power as a woman and so begs Titus for the life of his son, thus depriving herself of her pride and her royal position by humiliating herself. In this way, Tamora tries to persuade the Roman general to forgive the life of her son whose only crime was to fight for his country. Nonetheless, Alarbus is still sacrificed, and Tamora is not even allowed to grieve for her son.

In fact, these two women are compared when Demetrius joins his mother in her grieving and reminds Tamora that just as the gods allowed the Queen of Troy to achieve her revenge, so will the gods help her:

DEMETRIUS: The selfsame gods that armed the Queen of Troy

With opportunity of sharp revenge

Upon the –Thracian tyrant in his tent

May favor Tamora, Queen of the Goths (1.1. 136-139)

The sacrifice and death of their progeny is essential within the change suffered by the suffering/grieving *maters* since it is due to their pain that they decide to lash out at those who took the lives of their sons and daughters. Tamora and Hecuba lose their status and power by becoming war widows on the side of the losers. Both have lost not only their land and their social status but also a large part of their family. And the progeny that has survived is subjected to unfair treatment and even sacrifice. When they see their progeny die, these mothers rebel and assume an active role of implacable avengers. Like Polixena's, Tamor's son is sacrificed for the "good" of the victor's army, and women, in their subject position, become objects of abuse of power for the tyrants who razed their lands and their ancestry. In addition, the afflicted mothers beg to their captors for mercy, but both are unheeded. Like Hecuba, at the moment when her son is sacrificed, Tamora will adopt a strategy to carry out her revenge against the Romans. Hecuba and Tamora adopt an attitude that seems passive; however, they begin to plan a revenge that they will achieve through clever speech and by pretending to be harmless. Thus, these two women are underestimated by their captors.

The Queen of Troy uses her wits to deceive the men around her by posing as a weak old woman and a sorrowful mother who suffers from her misfortunes. The Queen of the Goths adopts a similar strategy by agreeing to marry the new Roman Emperor Saturninus. By accepting this marriage, Tamora becomes a kind of counselor of the Emperor who distrusts Titus. Taking advantage of this position, Tamora weaves a speech to convince the Emperor that they must get rid of Titus to ensure the favor of the people. herefore, Tamora moves in the public sphere as a result of the status that was granted to her when she became the Empress of Rome. While it is true that the misfortunes of her family were caused by the Romans, Tamora will rebel and face the Romans to get her retribution:

TAMORA: 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 street and beg for grace in vain. (1.1.453-458)

In Hecuba's case the first step in her revenge is to trick Polimestor into the trojan shop. Once at the store, Hecuba uses her cunning and manages to convince her son's murderer to be left alone with her to take her revenge. Consequently, even though Tamora inflicts on Titus the same misfortune that he inflicted on her on different occasions, Tamora's actions are considered monstrous because she is a woman. Therefore, the role of Hecuba and Tamora in their respective tragedies demonstrates how the public actions of war motivate these women

to leave the private sphere to assume "masculine" behavior and thus avenge the death of their progeny to assert their grievability. Moreover, gender stereotypes and preconceptions allow these queens to hide their intentions and achieve their goals since, by being underestimated, they can move more freely.

At the end of both cycles of revenge, the two women are punished for their transgressions. In the case of Hecuba, she is transformed into a dog whose grave has no name, leaving the queen anonymous. Like Hecuba, Tamora's punishment not only frames her in the monstrous but also demonstrates how her funeral rites are not carried out in order to punish her acts and emphasize how her death is not a cause for mourning. Álvarez affirms that the punishment set forth in the tragedy of Euripides is part of the symbolic violence imposed on the queen. The metamorphosis into a female dog will enclose her into the chthonic world, a locus of containment, *par excellence*, for the monstrous. The dehumanization of Hecuba and transformation into a creature of the underworld is reflected by executing an extreme action that takes her away from the traditional feminine sphere, just as Tamora whose corpse is not buried and is instead fed to the beasts.

In sum, both queens become spoils of war and lose their worth in society with the death of their husbands. The female discourse is silenced within the warlike conflict because it belongs to the private space. According to Lai "[t]he threat and resistance of the alien are bound to be marked and destroyed by the dominant authority, where the manipulation of the Foucauldian 'micro-power' is treated as a symbolic structure of omnipotence and omnipresence by Greenblatt" (9). Thus, Tamora and Hecuba are doomed to destruction as a result of their refusal to comply with the rules and their desire to fight back against their oppressors. As part of the subjected group (females, outsiders, and slaves), Hecuba and Tamora represent the threat of

the Other and are thus subjected to abuse and humiliation to the point where they choose to rebel, and so they pay a price for their defiance. Nonetheless, the same defiance that leads them to their death will also help them achieve their revenge.

Both Tamora and Hecuba discover how their position as slave/women can benefit them against their enemies, and they use a masculine/rational discourse to deceive those around them. Tamora and Hecuba show themselves as fearsome figures. Although they protect or try to protect their offspring, they depart from the feminine ideal by taking revenge into their own hands, by disrupting in the public sphere and by destabilizing the social order. That is why both are punished as an example for the other women. While both women are condemned for their revenge, both, Hecuba and Tamora, achieve their goal of retribution. In sum, both plays demonstrate how war conflicts and revenge unleash a circle of violence and death by objectifying women. Thus, the ideal of restraint is violated by the woman who adopts the masculine discourse of revenge. As a result, the rebellion of these women generates revenge after the violence committed against them and their revenge associates them to female monstrosity.

4.3.3 The Use of Manipulation, Rape, and Grief in Revenge

The Queen of the Goths is aware of the limits of her power as a woman within Roman society. Therefore, she decides to use different strategies in order to deceive men and obtain her revenge. Tamora's actions are considered monstrous because of transgression of norms and the violence that she inscribes in each aspect of her revenge against Titus and his family. Tamora's refusal of gender norms allows her to scheme against her captors since she no longer has the necessity to follow feminine ideals of behavior, and so she openly mimics

male actions. To hurt her enemies, Tamora attacks that which affects them the most, their pride and their reputation. By pretending to be helpless, Tamora misleads the Romans into thinking that she is harmless, so that they will not perceive her as a threat. Once the Romans are confident that Tamora is not dangerous, they lower their guards and Tamora attacks the Andronici one by one. Thus, Tamora engages in a monstrous revenge against Rome by using manipulation, rape, and grief as weapons against her enemies.

Manipulation becomes a tool for Tamora to sway men and use them to her advantage, as such, she is able to manipulate her children and her new husband. Tamora weaves a web of lies to ensnare Saturninus and the Andronici in order to have the opportunity to punish them, which she does during the royal hunt when the rape of Lavinia takes place. In fact, the rape constitutes a form of violence that asserts male dominance over the female body. This dominance is given to Chiron and Demetrius, but also to Tamora who refuses to pardon Lavinia and allows her sons to desecrate her body. Karen Bamford in *Sexual Violence on the Jacobean Stage* proposes an understanding of sexual assault as being part of a culture instead of nature; consequently, rape would then be a socially constructed male dominance rather than an impulse. According to Bamford, "In illegally possessing a female, the rapist dominates and dishonours another man, or men, as well as the victim" (7). As a consequence, by raping Lavinia, Tamora is taking revenge not only on Lavinia, but also on Titus as her legal proprietor.

Tamora's refusal to help Lavinia condemns Titus' daughter but also re-affirms her dominance over the Andronici, despite being a woman. According to Gregg, this behavior "corresponds to the masculinisation of her character; Lavinia says to her 'O Tamora, thou bearest a woman's face -', before being interrupted (2.2.136). This disruption of normative

gender traits in part relates to the threat Tamora poses as a sexually experienced woman, compared to the meek Lavinia" (8). Tamora, unlike Lavinia, embraces her sexuality and uses it to her favor. Tamora believes that in order to obtain the power necessary to succeed, she must harden herself to commit the necessary acts to punish the Andronici.

Although Tamora is not the one that suggested the rape of Lavinia (it was Aaron), she allows her sons to ravage Lavinia and even encourages them to do so and to make sure that she will not be able to reveal their crime. The complexity of Tamora's actions during the rape of Lavinia is a result of her fluid gender that shifts between male and female behaviors. In regards to the performativity of gender, Butler declares, "The presumption of a binary gender system implicitly retains the belief in a mimetic relation of gender to sex whereby gender mirrors sex or is otherwise restricted by it. When constructed status of gender is theorized as radically independent of sex, gender itself becomes a free-floating artifice" (27). The fluidity of Tamora's gender allows her to constantly change her demeanor depending on who she is with. For example, when talking to the Emperor, she appears as a loving and submissive wife who cares for her husband. But when she faces the Andronici, she becomes cunning, manipulative, and merciless, thus abandoning the discursive performativity that would force her into acting exclusively as a "woman." The use of rape in the play demonstrates a reality for Early Modern women and also Roman women who were victims of a patriarchal society that constantly inscribed its laws on their bodies and threatened them with punishment if they disobeyed. Thus, the bodies of Lavinia and Tamora are sites of inscription for the patriarchal society of Rome. But while Tamora rejects social roles of masculinity and femininity, Lavinia is willing to follow patriarchal commands and protect them, even to the cost of her life.

Lavinia's rape asserts Tamora's power, and it also shows the importance of the female body as being part of a system that polices female sexuality and its possibility of creating life. Tamora does not stop her sons from defiling a fellow woman since she remembers how she also pleaded for Alarbus' life, but her pleas were ignored. Due to this fact, Tamora denies any form of mercy for Lavinia. The use of rape as a weapon against enemies is not new, and in *Titus Andronicus* it serves the purpose of accelerating the plot and differentiating the two female representations of the play as the ideal woman turned into a martyr and the unrestrained woman turned into a monster.

Tamora's final act of revenge against the Romans is fulfilled during the bloody banquet prepared by Titus. Although Titus forces Tamora into eating her children, Tamora's death leads Titus to his own demise, thus, inadvertedly completing Tamora's revenge against the Andronici. In sum, through her death, Tamora drags Titus into the same nightmarish murder by the hands of another. Tamora was able to destroy the Roman Empire in her search for revenge and adds more revolt to the existing political turmoil. The barbaric invasion that was repelled by Titus at the beginning of the play re-emerges through Tamora, her children and their acts. As stated by Chaudbury:

> The transgressive travesticism of Tamora's role, as the vanquished and the conqueror, also draws attention to the heavily mediated projection of women on the Elizabethan stage through cross-dressing, which colludes with the object represented to construct a hybrid deviancy and undermines imperial and patriarchal discourses of purity (6).

By assuming male-oriented roles, Tamora transgresses social boundaries that allow her to gain the power necessary to attack Titus and by extension, Rome. Gregg states, "[i]n order

for Tamora to exact the revenge she desires upon Titus, she must establish herself in patriarchal society. This movement corresponds to the masculinisation of her character" (7). Thus, Tamora subverts her subject position and uses it to her advantage in order to defeat her enemies and the very system that took her son's life. Tamora, Queen of the Goths, loses her life and children during the final banquet, but she is successful in killing her enemies and ending Saturninus' Empire.

4.3.4. The Struggle to Assert Grievability

Grief constitutes a human emotion that conveys strong feelings of sadness, in most cases, for the loss of someone that is loved by another person. To grieve someone implies that that person's life mattered and that his/her position as a subject was worthy of being grieved. Judith Butler uses the term "ungrievable" to refer to the lives of people who have lived outside of the norms or rejected by the system. Their lives are perceived as a life that was not lived. Therefore, such a life lacks the conditions to be considered worthy of grief, and so they become ungrievable. In order to determine grievability, society uses precariousness to assert which lives are meaningful and worthy. Thus, based on precariousness, there are lives that are deemed unworthy and ungrievable.

Social frames make possible assertions that determine which subjects have lived and are thus recognized as living within a frame that is accepted. Socio-political aspects influence the frames by which one accepts or fails to apprehend a life as injured or lost since socio-political aspects are indeed an operation of power (Butler 1). From a New Historicist perspective, power relations determine the system and the lives of people within that system. In addition, institutions assert which life is more precarious than others. In other words, some

bodies matter more than others based purely on socio-political conditions that deem an individual as "having lived." Such notion unequivocally requires the subject to be a part of established frames and to respect and live within said frames. Frames influence the capacity to apprehend lives as "lived" by organizing visual experiences, and at the same time, they generate ontologies of the subjects. A person who does not adhere to norms or who is of no value to the system by him/herself or in addition to another, becomes unrecognizable as worthy of being grievable. Thus, there are subjects who are not recognizable as subjects, based on their precariousness and consequently, their grievability.

Tamora is a woman whose eldest son is brutally murdered despite her pleas. The spectacle of violence forces Tamora into a transformation from *mater dolorosa* to avenger in order to assert the grievability of her family. When Titus and his sons announce that they will sacrifice Alarbus, Tamora kneels and begs for his life. She even appeals to pity and to Titus' mercy in an attempt to save Alarbus from his sacrifice:

> TAMORA: 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. (1.1.119-123)

Tamora uses the phrase "draw near the nature of the gods . . . in being merciful" in an attempt to recall Roman heroic values, but Titus would rather appease his desire of revenge through a religious ritual. Besides, Titus justifies the murder of Alarbus by saying that it is a form of retribution for the death of his other sons during the war against the Goths. So, when Titus tells Tamora "Patient yourself, madam," he expects her to be submissive and to suffer in

silence. As a woman, Tamora is not supposed to talk openly in the public sphere, and she is not supposed to complain, especially against a man. But Tamora's attitude is a reflection of her desire to protect and avenge her family even to the cost of her pride and her life. This attitude would normally be venerated in a father, but being a woman, Tamora is not allowed to act nor to grieve. She can only accept her son's death and resign to obeying the Romans.

Catherine Belsey asserts, "Indeed, we might see Shakespeare's plays as contributing directly to the early modern process of naturalizing the affectionate nuclear family. But because this was a moment of change, they also make apparent to us now the anxieties provoked by the values themselves and the gender-models they construct" (qtd. in Fitzgerald 15). This assertion is exemplified through the social expectations placed on Lavinia as a dutiful daughter and in Tamora as a mother pleading for her son's life. In sum, Tamora casts aside her pride and begs for Alarbus; but she is instead humiliated, and her son is violently murdered. After this ritual, Tamora realizes that the only way for her to assert grievability for herself and her family is by force, and so, she takes on the role of avenger. Tamora chooses to become a monster in order to assert Alarbus' grievability. As a mother, she refuses to forgive those who sacrificed her son and who even denied her the opportunity to grieve for him; thus, Tamora becomes an avenger.

For Steven Gregg, "One of the play's nightmares is undoubtedly the paradoxical curative capacity of violence, where war leads to murder, murder to rape, and rape to medicinal cannibalism, a macabre political solution. . ." (11). Hence, *Titus Andronicus* presents a double cycle of revenge, which is led by Tamora seeking justice for Alarbus, and Titus seeking justice for his family and his own pride. This double cycle of revenge "privileges violent, sexual retribution over sound justice; and yet the justice at the beginning

of the play acted out on Alarbus is bloody, patriarchal and vengeful in itself" (Gregg 12). Thus, Tamora is willing to do anything in her power in order to eradicate the man responsible for the death of her son, as an act of defiance towards Rome and her captors.

On one hand, male revenge in *Titus Andronicus* reflects the overall perception of revenge as entertaining on stage and as necessary in cases where honor was tainted, and men were wronged. Titus is able to commit heinous and violent acts of revenge and murder that included the killing of his enemies and even of his own family. It is pertinent to remark that Roman society allowed this barbarous behavior due to Titus's social standing and his own position as a powerful male subject in a patriarchal society where virility and nobility are the typical traits of a hero. Titus' actions are justified because of his grief and his honor; thus, violence becomes a resource in his search for justice as a Roman and as a father. Nonetheless, Titus is far from being a hero, he is willing to kill anyone that disobeys his command (as is the case of his son Mutius) or taints his pride (as did Lavinia), even if they are his children. Rather than heroic, Titus' actions should be considered as tyrannical. But instead, the Elizabethan audience is invited to sympathize with the Roman war general and by the end of the play, his son proclaims that Titus was the hero that cleansed Rome from the Goths, and should thus be considered as a hero, despite his actions.

On the other hand, female revenge, unlike male revenge, is scorned in *Titus Andronicus* since Tamora is depicted as a female outsider with a lust for violence. Nonetheless, Tamora's reasons for revenge come from her wish to avenge the gruesome murder of her son and to assert his grievability. While Roman law cheers for Titus, the same law forbids Tamora from seeking revenge and constantly works against her. Despite being a part of a double oppressed group, since she is a woman and a Goth, Tamora is able to swiftly

attack and eliminate several of her enemies in a rather effective and cunning way. However, even though she strives to punish the ones who wronged her and her family, the audience is not encouraged to empathize with her but rather to chastise her. The characters of the play perceive Tamora's revenge as evil and monstrous. Thus, they compare Tamora to a beast and that is why they refuse to bury her and toss her remains into the wilderness to be devoured by creatures. The refusal to bury Tamora symbolizes her similarity to wild animals that are outside of the civilized world. Therefore, Tamora's death is not understood as the death of a person but rather, as the death of a monstrous creature that polluted Rome. In sum, Tamora is considered as evil, lustful, selfish, and macabre for taking revenge while her male counterpart is praised as a hero for doing the same.

Even though Titus plans and carries out a much more sinister and macabre revenge than Tamora, he is still considered a hero while Tamora becomes a monster in the eyes of the Romans. Tamora wishes for revenge and is at times aided by her lover and sons. Tamora uses her wits and sexuality to convince these men to help her complete her retribution. Nonetheless, Tamora is judged as the author and mastermind of the entire revenge and is punished accordingly. Although this would seem as a form of retribution against evil doers, in Titus' case he also performs macabre and violent actions that are also taboo, yet, his honor is never put into question and his quest is judged as noble when compared to Tamora's. The actions of both characters have deep effects on the Roman Empire and on their respective family, but gender plays an essential role when judging each character's actions as either heroic or as monstrous and deranged.

In sum, male and female acts of revenge constitute acts of retribution against those who wronged the man or the woman. Nonetheless, despite being the same action, these acts

are judged differently based on the avenger's sex. From this perspective, William Shakespeare's play depicts a double cycle of revenge where both revengers find a tragic end. However, Titus also finds revindication and his twisted and macabre actions are justified under the guile of being a search for justice. But he does it mainly to compensate for his wounded pride. Tamora, unlike Titus, finds no vindication and is instead treated as a beast after her murder, and her body is tossed into the wilderness to be devoured. In short, Tamora becomes the villain in a story where the "hero" is responsible for both cycles of revenge and for the murders not only of his enemies but also of his family, with no consequences. While Tamora's actions are reprimandable, Titus' are accepted and even admired, since Titus holds a power position as a male patriarch. Therefore, Titus' transgressions have no real consequences for him and eventually allow for his family to rule Rome. In Tamora's case, her family is exterminated, her actions are condemned and her corpse is profaned. Definitely, gender plays a crucial role when judging revenge in Shakespeare's as well as in texts of the Ancient World where men are hailed as heroes and women are perceived as monsters.

Concluding Remarks

The purpose of this thesis was to create social awareness in regards to stereotypes that affect female representations in literature, particularly by showing how either strong or docile women are perceived as monsters who are punished for their actions. In order to do so, it was necessary to ascertain how socio-historical contexts influenced the way in which monstrosity is portrayed in the female characters in William Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus.* It is pertinent to point out that Shakespeare's text presents an array of characters that exhibits the influence of the Early Modern Era and the Roman Empire throughout the narrative. Both historical contexts reveal a perception of women as being second class citizens who belong to an oppressed group in need of constant surveillance. As a consequence, Shakespeare's female characters, Lavinia and Tamora, are doomed to be used, objectified, punished, and ultimately eliminated as scapegoats by an unbalanced patriarchal society. The Early Modern context and the Roman context show male anxieties towards women's bodies and their behavior. As such, Lavinia and Tamora are scrutinized under hegemonical notions that dictate the social roles of women. While Lavinia self-fashions herself to be the ideal model of femininity as daughter and wife, Tamora rebels and adopts male oriented behaviors that deem her as monstrous for the Romans. In sum, Shakespeare's text evinces how women are helpless within patriarchal societies where they are controlled and punished for transgressing the norms or for being obedient, leaving women with no chance for freedom nor any way of escaping their tragic ends.

In *Titus Andronicus*, the stereotypes of the male characters consist of the barbaric Other perceived as a threat, Aaron, or the stereotypical flawed hero, Titus. But, it is important to notice that in both cases, these male stereotypes are not considered as dangerous or as

weak as female stereotypes. Although Aaron was mocked and humiliated at times, his crimes seem to be undermined when compared to Tamora's. The same goes for Titus' crimes since even though he engaged in violent acts, his actions are justified and considered heroic. In the case of women, their actions are judged more harshly, and these women are punished because they are considered as beasts, scapegoats, or burdens. The historical context determines whether an individual is supported by the hegemonic structure. Thus, power relations will favor those who are considered worthy and powerful, as is the case of men and most notably, Roman men in Shakespeare's text. The hegemonic structures in the Roman and Early Modern contexts are both essentially patriarchal; therefore, female characters are portrayed in terms of moral extremes that mirrored male anxieties towards overly submissive women and strong women, as well. Tamora is the representation of what Shakespeare's culture feared: powerful independent women who could threaten male stability. In sum, gender stereotypes in *Titus Andronicus* help to justify and support male actions while condemning female behavior.

Another prominent element in *Titus Andronicus* is the role of monstrous anatomies, both, male and female, as consequences of power struggles. Monstrous anatomies are ultimately eliminated from the narrative in an attempt to "save" society and cleanse the Roman Empire in order to be reborn. Male monstrous anatomies are used as dramatic elements that shock the audience, while female monstrous anatomies are doomed to be marginalized, abused, ostracized, and eliminated in order to bring social stability. For example, Lavinia's body becomes an inscriptive site for patriarchal structures where male characters fight for control and so decide to rape and mutilate her body in order to ascertain their dominance as well as to humiliate Lavinia's "owners", that is, the men in her family.

The loss of Lavinia's limbs reflects her fragmented identity as she changes from maiden to the abject. Lavinia had been groomed and she had self-fashioned to become an ideal Roman woman. With the intrusion of the Goths, Lavinia's fate is sealed as her passivity facilitates her abuse. However, Lavinia continues to uphold Roman values even after being violently deformed. Her willingness to protect the beliefs and ideals of the patriarchal ideology did not help her, and sadly, the same hegemony deems Lavinia as expendable. Therefore, Lavinia is murdered as a part of the cleansing of Rome. Lavinia's body mirrors the body of Rome and the invasion of the savage Others, represented by the Goth. In short, justifying Roman anxieties about foreigners and women, Lavinia's body is desecrated and mutilated.

Tamora's body, unlike Lavinia, is not subjected to a physical transformation, but her anatomy stills suffers abuse, as she is tricked into eating her children and later murdered. Tamora is described as beautiful by Saturninus, and so, he decides to marry her. However, as the tragedy progresses, Tamora's actions earn her the mockery of the Romans who constantly use beastly imagery to describe her. Not only is she mocked, but her adultery and procreation of a bastard baby are punished through a macabre revenge involving incest and cannibalism with her remaining sons. As a result, monstrosity becomes a gateway where gender, ethnicity, and violence collide to create grotesque beings that fuel existing social anxieties. In the case of female monstrosity, women are forced into the margins before being abused and ultimately, silenced and eliminated to protect social order and become examples for other women that might choose to rebel.

The double cycle of revenge presented in *Titus Andronicus* depicts the overall perception of revenge as being exclusively male. Shakespeare alludes to classical texts in his tragedy to reinforce the prominence of violence, rape, and murder as instruments that help

further a plot; nonetheless, the texts mentioned demonstrate the constant abuse and humiliation of the female body. Lucrece, Philomena, and Hecuba are female leads that are politically used to assert male dominance. While Lucrece chooses to sacrifice her life after the loss of her chastity, Philomena looks for revenge with the help of her sister, and Hecuba obtains her revenge while avenging the wrongdoings committed against her progeny. In fact, Lavinia's narrative is closely tied to Philomena and Lucrece since the former represents the docile submissive woman. Tamora's narrative resembles Hecuba's since she seeks revenge for the death of her son. Grieving mothers are expected to comply and suffer in silence, yet, when they decide to assert their grievability and the grievability of their progeny, they are perceived as monstrous. Therefore, Hecuba and Tamora are frowned upon and punished for their transgressions. In fact, maidenhood and motherhood constitute important moments in a woman's life, but, both are policed and controlled by the male collective to ensure compliance and submission. Anyone who rejects these forms of control is labeled as monstrous, dangerous, unstable, and in need of elimination. One would expect that the obedient and servile characters would be spared, but this is not the case in Shakespeare's play since female submissiveness renders women helpless against abuse and propitiates the loss of their chastity/worth. Hence, women's weakness seems to justify their execution as well.

Let us go back to the questions that fueled this thesis: What female behaviors are considered monstrous or deviant in Early Modern context? How does the Early Modern culture view the female body in terms of monstrosity? How is female revenge perceived in Early Modern tragedies as opposed to male revenge? Firstly, even though not all female behavior is monstrous, most female actions are equally punished by the hegemonic patriarchy. The Early Modern context valued submissiveness, silence, modesty, servility, and

morality in women. Thus, many of the ideal women presented on stage followed these expectations in the hopes of being rewarded or at least guarded from danger. Unfortunately, submissiveness is not rewarded by men, but rather, it is identified as a weakness, and it is exploited in search of fulfilling male desires, as in the case of Lavinia's rape. While Lavinia followed and defended notions of morality and modesty, the characters of the play fight over her as a prize and violate her body. Even her family considers Lavinia's tragedy a source of shame for them, instead of focusing on Lavinia's personal and individual suffering. Thus, social expectations from both the Early Modern context and the Roman context serve no purpose for Lavinia, except for framing her into a scapegoat and a burden. Female suffering is then silenced and overshadowed by male suffering and desire for revenge. But female suffering can lead to rebellious acts from women.

Tamora's behavior opposed Early Modern and Roman ideals of female behavior, and as such, she is marginalized, mocked, and considered monstrous. However, Tamora is not bound by Lavinia's social norms. As a result, she was not afraid to challenge the Romans and discard her femininity to adopt male behavior in search of justice. It would appear that women are left with no chance of escaping execution even if they follow social norms or rebel against them. But through rebellion, Tamora is able to make her enemies pay, even at the cost of her life, thus, avenging her progeny. Lavinia, unlike Tamora, is not able to avenge her crime and is killed before witnessing the death of one of the masterminds behind her rape and mutilation. Instead, Lavinia witnesses how her father confirms her lack of worth and murders her to regain *his* honor.

Secondly, the female body is perceived as monstrous in terms of lack of physical beauty and sexuality, which is why throughout the play the female body becomes a source

of conflicts. When restrained and chaste, men still fight to control it and own it, as it was Lavinia's case. Once the female body loses its chastity, the body loses its value, and so Lavinia, who "allowed" this transgression, is punished through permanent disfigurement and mutilation. Her disfigured body turns Lavinia into an abject entity that shocks and discomforts beholders. This transformation confirms male fear of the female body as having the potential of becoming grotesque. In fact, Lavinia's body is a war zone for the Romans and the Goths. Her wounds and grotesque appearance haunt the audience. In fact, Lavinia's monstrous appearance warns the audience against the Goths and the fear of losing female chastity and beauty. Notwithstanding, Lavinia's grief and suffering are not fully recognized by others, her monstrosity marginalizes her since it disrupts order.

Tamora's body is not physically monstrous as Lavinia's, after her mutilation, but the way in which Tamora uses her body makes it monstrous for the Romans. Tamora uses her sexuality unrestrained and speaks her mind freely in such a way that she is able to manipulate men and humiliate them as well. Tamora's body can be considered grotesque as a result of the way in which she uses it to exploit her sexuality. Additionally, Tamora's womb becomes a receptable for the monstrous when she gives birth to an illegitimate heir that could threaten Roman political stability. Tamora's body consumes the flesh of her dead sons during the macabre banquet offered by Titus. Finally, Tamora's body is dehumanized through the denial of a proper burial when the Romans choose to toss her body into the wilderness to be devoured by beasts. Thus, in *Titus Andronicus*, the female body is presented as monstrous in the two main female characters and is also eliminated in an attempt to justify the violent and uncivilized behavior of the male characters, by conveniently blaming the evils of a corrupt society on women.

There is still one more important question to ponder: how is female revenge perceived in comparison to male revenge? Following Gregg's own findings, the double cycle of revenge seems to privilege violent, ritual, and sexual retribution over sound justice.But at the same time, civility is put into question from the beginning of the play when Titus demands the sacrifice of Alarbus ignoring the desperate pleas of Tamora. This form of revenge against the Goths is grotesque, bloody, and patriarchal in itself, as a statement of power over Tamora and her sons. Titus, as a man, is able to freely murder other people's children as well as his own without repercussions form his society. Not only is he allowed to do so, but he is also rewarded and held in great honor, meanwhile Tamora is judged and punished for seeking revenge as Titus did. Had she been a man, Tamora's revenge would not have been judged negatively and her actions would have been justified as a search for justice. Unfortunately, Tamora is a woman, and so she is treated unfairly and murdered, as punishment for her transgressions. In short, Titus' gender contributes in transforming the villain into a hero since he belongs to the hegemonic group and his actions help to protect the sovereignty of the governing ideology, as new historicist views have pointed out in terms of power.

William Shakespeare's Early Modern Tragedy *Titus Andronicus* depicts stereotypes of female monstrosity as a way to portray notions of gender, morality, and revenge of the Roman Empire and of its own historical time. Therefore, Shakespeare's tragedy presents a nightmarish cycle of unbridled and bloody revenge where the male protagonist uses revenge as a way to assert his power and humiliate his enemies publicly, while the female antagonist uses revenge as a means to assert the grievability of her progeny and her own identity as a strong woman who refuses to submit. And in such a society male characters who murder and

engage in taboos are protected while women who seek justice for being wronged are punished.

The notions of hero and angel/demon are reinforced in the play through the actions of Titus, Lavinia, and Tamora since each of them represents one of these images. As the hero, Titus' actions are rewarded and forgiven (even the murder of his progeny), while Lavinia as the Angel becomes a martyr and is sacrificed to be cleansed. Finally, as the monster, Tamora is judged, punished, and murdered to bring order back into society. Additionally, the female body is judged, used, and abused more harshly as a result of its subject position within society as a commodity. Rape becomes a central element in the plot since the rape of Lavinia mirrors the rape of the Roman Empire by the Goths, as a form of corruption and disease. Also, rape is not an uncommon resource used in war conflicts since the female body is a symbolic territory that is constantly a war zone and it is thus occupied by the male collective as a form of control. Consequently, the female body is feared and punished because of male anxieties towards female capacity to reproduce (monstrosity) and its sexuality. All these elements show how female characters are doomed to destruction within a patriarchal society that gives power to men while it oppresses and marginalizes women. Nonetheless, while Lavinia accepts her fate, Tamora rebels and through her rebellion (representing the rebellion of the Goths as well), she is able to obtain enough power to destroy her enemies and avenge Alarbus.

Lavinia and Tamora become pawns in a political struggle that vilifies their actions. From a new historical perspective, no place is safe and no behavior will protect women in Shakespeare's text since female existence becomes a threat to social order. Consequently, society depicts strong women as monstrous while it punishes submissive women who are

abused, by re-victimizing them and blaming them for male acts of sexual and physical violence. While monstrosity is a polymorph term, true monstrosity lies inside each individual and the choices and consequences he/she makes. In sum, Shakespeare's tragedy presents female heroines that suffer gruesome fates for submitting to men or for rebelling against them. Thus, female monstrosity, as a "tool" to frame women as in Lavinia's case, demonstrates women's inability to escape injustice in a patriarchal society that labels them as monsters while men are saviors. Tamora, as the ultimate female monster in *Titus Andronicus,* is eliminated like Lavinia, but the former is able to achieve her revenge and take her enemies with her. In De Beauvoir's words, all oppression creates a state of war, and in *Titus Andronicus,* Tamora, as the female monster wages war against her oppressors and asserts the grievability of her family and her own, as a strong unrepentful woman. For her, monstrosity was not a limitation, but rather a weapon to be used against her captors and wrong doers. In sum, Tamora chose monstrosity and with it, she fulfilled her revenge by punishing Romans and destroying their Empire at the hands of the monster they created. Hence, in Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus,* female monstrosity is perceived, provoked, and created.

This thesis presents an eclectic analysis where the social contexts of the play and the author are scrutinized to understand their roles and understand how they shape the characters and determine their actions. In fact, social contexts are responsible for the way in which a characters' actions are perceived as monstrous based on their gender and ethnicity. Additionally, this study confirms the role of women as dichotomous images used to represent contrasting ideals of femininity and how the hegemonic system determines the worth of the lives of the female characters in the tragedy. As a result, this thesis demonstrates how

representations of female monstrosity are linked to the social contexts and the perception of women as a threat to order, which is why the male characters will try to eliminate the female characters that rebel against social order.

As a recommendation for future studies, it is essential to continue analyzing the literary representations of women as monstrous based on the socio-historical context in order to understand the reasons behind these negative depictions. Finally, the study of Shakespeare's earlier works can help to uncover the creation of certain characters as prototypes for what would later become some of his most iconic plays such as *Hamlet* or *Macbeth*, where the audience can find strong women such as Lady Macbeth, who could have easily been inspired by Tamora. The study of earlier Shakespearian plays such as *Titus Andronicus,* the role of the male gaze and how it projects male fantasies of violence on the female body and female behavior deserve future studies.

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