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VOLUME 35

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

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INTRODUCTION

AN ESSAY IN LITERARY DETECTION

Two substantive editions of *Titus Andronicus* have come down to us. One is a quarto printed in 1594, which passed out of ken between 1691, when Gerald Langbaine mentioned it in his *Account of the English Dramatick Poets*, and 1904, when a copy of it was discovered in Sweden at the house of a post-office clerk, and was purchased for £2000 by the American millionaire H. C. Folger, in whose Shakespeare Library at Washington it now lies. A photographic facsimile of this copy, published in 1936 with an informative introduction by J. Q. Adams, forms the basis of the present text. The other original is, of course, that printed in the First Folio of 1623. Set up from a copy of the third edition (1611) of the quarto, this exhibits clear traces of prompt-book influence, and must have derived from the theatre a whole scene (3. 2), of nearly ninety lines, not found in any of the three quarto editions. Some conjectures as to the kind of manuscript used in 1594 and the exact nature of the copy in 1623 will be found in the Note on the Copy, while what is known, or can be inferred, about the origins of the play and its early productions will be dealt with in § IV of this Introduction; such matters being more easily approached after the problem of authorship, which is here my main concern, has found at any rate a tentative solution.

The story of *Titus Andronicus* is derived, not from Roman history, but from some medieval tale of 'Rome the Great', probably of Oriental origin. Until 1936 no source for the play was known. In the introduction to the facsimile above mentioned (pp. 7-9) Adams gives, however, a brief account of an eighteenth-century chap-book, recently discovered at the Folger Library

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and I understand shortly to be published, which is apparently a late reprint of the prose tale upon which the play was based. Adams even suggests that the entry, on 6 February 1594 in the Stationers' Register, to the printer John Danter of the copy of a book entitled 'A Noble Roman Historye of Tytus Andronicus' with 'the ballad thereof' may refer to the first edition of this chap-book, and not, as has been generally assumed, to that of the play, which came from the same press and in the same year 1594. This seems to me unlikely.¹ But if Adams is right, the quarto probably appeared shortly afterwards and would not in Danter's eyes require a separate entry.

I. *The play and the critics*

The historian of literature, no less than the scientist, must have labels for his pigeon-holes; and ever since J. A. Symonds² invented a convenient one in 'Tragedy of Blood', *Titus Andronicus* has been classified as such with Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy*, Marlowe's *Jew of Malta*, Chettle's *Tragedy of Hoffman*, the anonymous *Alphonsus, Emperor of Germany*, and other Elizabethan plays, in which a succession of ruthless crimes is accompanied by a prodigal effusion of blood. A vigorous child of the native Senecan drama, such as *Gorboduc* and *The Misfortunes of Arthur*, the type chiefly differs from its parent in that it exhibits on or just off the stage those acts of carnage and violation which, though constituting the main ingredients of the earlier plays, were there, in

¹ As the author of *A Knack to Know a Knave*, 1592, was already familiar with the story of Titus, I am inclined to think the chap-book must have been available by then. See below, pp. xli-xlii.

² His footnote on p. 391 of *Shakespeare's Predecessors* (1883) remains one of the best characterizations of the type in general.

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accordance with classical 'decorum', merely narrated and commented upon in lengthy and would-be lofty speeches. The 'university wits' who created the new form, writing as they did for the common playhouse and not like Hughes and Sackville directly for an audience of courtiers and lawyers, were of course bound to keep popular tastes in mind. Yet their classical allusions and quotations prove that they were still primarily concerned to catch the attention of the learned and the polite; and there are at least two scenes in *Titus* which only a classical scholar could fully understand.¹ In fact, the Tragedy of Blood was as fashionable with the Elizabethan and Jacobean high-brow as 'Crime Club' fiction is with his modern counterpart; a parallel not altogether flattering to ourselves. For the Elizabethan 'shocker', beginning as crude melodrama, grew under the hands of Shakespeare and Webster into tragedy of the highest order, while if a Fyodor Dostoevsky was able to raise the crime and detective story to the plane of *Macbeth*, he has had no followers. Nor can we ascribe it to any virtue of our own, or to 'progress' in general, that *Titus Andronicus*, which competed with *The Spanish Tragedy* for first place in the affections of the average Elizabethan playgoer, which retained much of its popularity into Jacobean days, and which was often performed in London for fifty years after the Restoration, has since 1725 practically disappeared from the stage², and is now only read by a few students in each generation. It ceased to be *à la mode*, like doublet and hose and codpiece; that is all.

It follows that critics of Victorian yesterday and Georgian to-day who profess nausea for these prototypes of the world's dramatic masterpieces must be humbugging either themselves or others. For what is

¹ 4. 2 and 4. 3.

² See Stage-History, pp. lxvi-lxix, below.

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wrong, as with most first experiments in the sphere of art, is not the character of the material—murder and debauchery do not offend us in their Jacobean offspring—but uncertainty of taste and lack of skill in the handling of it. Plethora, for example, the natural malady of artistic inexperience, is particularly conspicuous. There are some fifteen murders and executions in *Titus*, more than half of which take place on the stage; the heroine is raped, a little ‘off’, her tongue cut out and her hands ‘lopped’ from her arms; her father agrees to sacrifice his right hand to purchase life for his sons, in return for which their decapitated heads and his sundered hand are flung in contempt at his feet; in revenge for all this he then slits the throats of his daughter’s violators in full view of the audience, while she holds a basin between her stumps to catch the blood; and the play rises to a grand finale in a Thyestean banquet to which the female villain of the piece is lured that she may be made to feed upon her sons. Every outrage, moreover, has its accompaniment of lamentation, so that the blood of the victims is as it were mingled with the tears of the mourners. In short the play offers the usual bill of fare: motiveless malignity, continual blood-letting, and a relentlessly sustained assault upon the tear-ducts of the spectators.

Yet, even as compared with others of the same genre, *Titus* is a strange play, with something odd or baffling about it. If not the crudest of its kind, it is less homogeneous in style and more ramshackle in structure than most, while its incidents are often merely absurd. Titus’ enemy, Tamora, the villainous Queen of the Goths, takes a leading part in Act 1, and is referred to in the rest of the play as an astute schemer. But it is Aaron, her black paramour, who, though a mute in Act 1, afterwards contrives all the outrages against the family of the Andronici, not only without consulting Tamora, but professedly out of sheer devilry. Only towards the

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very end does she once again occupy the centre of the stage, and then her scheming is foolish and ineffectual. Moreover, the liaison between Aaron and Tamora, stressed at the opening of Act 2, possesses no further dramatic significance whatever, except in respect of its offspring, the black baby, which does not appear until 4. 2 and is itself an excrescence on the plot. Another anomaly, which there is no attempt to explain, is that though Tamora is Queen of the defeated Goths, it is to the Goths that Lucius son of Titus repairs to enlist help and raise an army against her and the emperor her husband.¹ And the situations are as crazy as the structure, the most ambiguous incidents being those in which Lavinia figures after she has become a handless, tongueless mute. Clearly intended to be the centre of the play's pathos, she is nevertheless slightly, and sometimes more than slightly, ludicrous whenever she appears. The speech with which her uncle Marcus greets her at her entry after the outrage is itself compact of anticlimax; and it must have been difficult for the more 'judicious' of Shakespeare's audience to refrain from hilarious applause at the acrobatic management by the boy-player of 'her' stumps, first in turning over the leaves of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, then with a stick as she reveals the names of her ravishers by writing them in the dust, and last when she holds the basin to catch their blood. But the height of absurdity is reached when at Titus' command she lowers her mouth to the stage, picks up his severed (sawdust-filled) right hand with her teeth, and trots after him as he exits, for all the world like a little puppy-dog. Furthermore, the discord and bathos which mark structure and incident are equally evident in dramatic character and poetic style. By what strange freak, for example, did it chance that the finest and tenderest passage of any length in the play, the love-

¹ See 3. 1. 286; 4. 2. 173; 4. 4. 27-38; 5. 1. 16 (and notes).

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poem at 2. 3. 10–29, was placed on the lips of Tamora the tiger? In a word, *The Most Lamentable Romaine Tragedie of Titus Andronicus* seems to jolt and bump along like some broken-down cart, laden with bleeding corpses from an Elizabethan scaffold, and driven by an executioner from Bedlam dressed in cap and bells.

Such a play would long since have been relegated to the limbo of half-forgotten drama by the Greene-Peele-Marlowe school, but for this: it was named during Shakespeare's lifetime as his by Francis Meres in 1598, and was included after his death among the other plays of the Folio by his fellow-actors Heminge and Condell. By what right was so great an honour conferred upon so unworthy an object? Or, if Shakespeare had in truth something to do with it, what in the name of *Richard III*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, to invoke the spirit of early plays alone, was this something he was trying to do? The second question, which awaits a satisfactory answer to the first, was never, I think, asked before the other day.¹ The first has been asked ever since the end of the seventeenth century, but though many answers have been found, none has been accepted as final. Yet, inasmuch as very little about *Titus* matters to us except its authorship, the rest of this Introduction must be given to one more attempt to solve that problem.

Three solutions are possible: the play may be a very bad or a very juvenile specimen of the master's handiwork; it may be another man's play which has been fathered upon him by some accident or misunderstanding; or it may be of mixed parentage, that is to say, a production for which Shakespeare is only in part responsible. Critical opinion, of which only a very brief outline can here be offered, has ranged itself under these three banners, swaying from one to another as genera-

¹ See Mark van Doren, *Shakespeare* (1939), pp. 42–3, and below, p. lii, n. 1.

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tion succeeded generation, or dividing its allegiance according to national distinctions.

A minor Restoration dramatist, Edward Ravenscroft, fired the train of controversy in 1687 by condemning *Titus*, not unjustly, as a ‘heap of rubbish’, and stating that he had been informed by ‘some anciently conversant with the stage’ that it was not Shakespeare’s play at all, ‘but brought by a private author to be acted, and he only gave some master-touches to one or two of the principal parts or characters’.¹ Ravenscroft was not a very reliable person, and the words, chiefly inspired by a desire to advertise his own ‘improved’ version, are of no value as evidence.² Yet, down to the end of the nineteenth century most English critics, taking their cue from him, and making light of the external evidence, have rejected Shakespeare’s authorship, while allowing that he may have added a few lines here and there. The Germans, on the other hand, have since the time of Schlegel³ with almost equal unanimity ascribed the play to him; and it is to their credit that they perceived the significance of Meres’ testimony and the inclusion in the First Folio a hundred years before it began to dawn upon scholars in this country. Nothing foreigners said, however, could make the case seem any more plausible to English-speaking persons possessed of any poetic sensibility and knowledge of Shakespeare. It was a debate over apparently irreconcilable factors, and as both factors visibly gathered force as time went on, finality looked like receding into the inane. Early in this century, for example, the puzzled layman was given two books to ponder: Alfred Pollard’s *Shakespeare Folios and Quartos* (1909), which, by immensely strengthening

¹ See E. K. Chambers, *William Shakespeare*, II, 254–5.

² See Stage-History, pp. lxvii–lxviii below, for an account of his *Titus Andronicus, or The Rape of Lavinia*.

³ Schlegel, *Dramatic Literature* (Bohn’s translation), pp. 442–6.

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the authority of Heminge and Condell, correspondingly strengthened the grounds for accepting as authentic all the plays in the First Folio; and, on the other side, J. M. Robertson's *Did Shakespeare write 'Titus Andronicus'?* (1905), in which the case against the authenticity of this Folio play was argued with more force and with a greater display of evidence than ever before.

Robertson made some distinguished converts, among them Dr Greg; and, though his forensic tone and special pleading repelled as many as his evidence won over, the book certainly carried the problem a stage nearer solution. Most of the evidence consisted of verbal parallels between *Titus* and the writings of Shakespeare's contemporaries in the late eighties and early nineties; and from these he argued that the play was in the main the creation of George Peele, though he conjecturally assigned certain scenes to Greene, Kyd, and Marlowe; the last named being a useful card for him when faced with passages which even he was forced to acknowledge exhibited the hand of genius. The verbal parallels seemed impressive in bulk and were often plausible in detail, especially those he extracted from the poems and plays of Peele. Respecting these last, he owed more, I fancy, than he acknowledged to the industrious but muddle-headed Charles Crawford, who in the course of an uncompromising defence of Shakespeare's authorship of *Titus* in the *Shakespeare Jahrbuch* for 1900, had unwittingly gone far to undermine his own case by drawing attention to a number of very close parallels between *Titus* and *The Honour of the Garter*, a poem written by Peele in the summer of 1593. Meanwhile, collecting verbal parallels became a popular hobby. The work of Dugdale Sykes,¹ for example, though not

¹ *Sidelights on Shakespeare* (1919), and *Sidelights on Elizabethan Drama* (1924).

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directly concerned with *Titus*, seemed to add strength to Robertson's case by throwing a good deal of fresh light upon Peele's diction. And when Robertson in 1924 brought out a new and enlarged edition of his book, in which he replied to critics of the first edition, it began to look as if Peele might be the long sought 'private author' referred to by Ravenscroft.

At this point, however, the other side hit back. Robertson, always blind to anything detrimental to his case, had made light of the external evidence; and his second edition, which he entitled *An Introduction to the Study of the Shakespeare Canon*, was designed as the first battering-ram in a grand assault upon the integrity of the First Folio. The assault was no sooner launched than it came under the deadly fire of Sir Edmund Chambers, who directed his guns against the enemy's main position. From his now famous lecture on *The Disintegration of Shakespeare* delivered before the British Academy in 1924, the reputation of Robertson never recovered, though his pen continued to function. And Chambers' attack was followed up in 1932 by a brilliant article from the pen of Miss St Clare Byrne in which she threw a great deal of cold water over the game of verbal parallels.¹ The pendulum of opinion among scholars in this country swung sharply in the direction of Shakespearian fundamentalism, and as the

¹ *The Library* (4th ser.), XIII, 21-48. See also A. M. Sampley, 'Verbal Tests' in *Peele's plays* (*Studies in Philology*, vol. 30, 1933, pp. 208-24), which gives a list of the 133 words and phrases claimed as characteristic of Peele by Robertson and Sykes, and shews that 120 of them may be found 'in identical or very similar form in other writers'. Had the article been more analytical it would have been more helpful. Spenser is the author from whom most of the parallels are drawn, and these are generally lumped together; but anything Spenser published after 1593 has little relevance either to *Titus* or Peele.

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dust of controversy cleared away, *Titus*, though barely referred to by Sir Edmund and not at all by Miss Byrne, appeared to be firmly based upon the impregnable rock of the Folio.

Yet the critical dilemma remained, with horns further apart than ever; for as our understanding and appreciation of Shakespeare's dramatic genius deepened, it became more and more difficult for the literary man as distinct from the scholar to accept *Titus* as his. In 1904, when the force of the external evidence was first coming to be realized in this country, Bradley wrote: '*Titus Andronicus* appeared in the Folio among Shakespeare's works. It is believed by some good critics¹ to be his: hardly anyone doubts that he had a hand in it.'² But the very book from which these words are taken increased the number of sensitive and discriminating readers who could do nothing but doubt, so that twenty-five years later such a reader, who also happened to be an excellent critic, was expressing himself in almost exactly the opposite sense. 'Of *Titus Andronicus*', John Bailey declared in 1929, 'I need say nothing, as scarcely anyone thinks Shakespeare wrote it.'³ Interesting as symptoms of fluctuating opinion, such observations, however, decided nothing, since decision could only come if the scholars succeeded in *proving* one of the three alternatives mentioned at the beginning of this section. Dr Greg had argued the second as early as 1908. Convinced, as I have said, by Robertson's first edition that 'no trace of Shakespeare's hand was discoverable in the extant text', he made a valiant effort to reconcile this conviction with a bibliographer's respect for the authority of the Folio by suggesting that the

¹ Cf. Raleigh's *Shakespeare*, pp. 84, 108, 125; and Saintsbury in *C.H.E.L.* v, 173-9.

² *Shakespearean Tragedy*, p. 200.

³ *Shakespeare*, p. 86.

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Quarto of 1594 represented the play before Shakespeare revised it, that the revised text, played by his company from 1594 onwards, was burnt in the fire that destroyed the Globe in 1613 and so never got into print, and finally that the unrevised text became *faute de mieux* the theatre prompt-book after 1613 and so went to the press with the other play-books used as copy for the Folio in 1623.¹ This claimed to be nothing more than a tentative suggestion advanced in order to reconcile apparently irreconcilable facts. But it opened up several interesting side-issues, to one or two of which we shall return, and it pointed the way we shall find to the true solution of the problem.

So far I have said nothing of the third school of *Titus* critics, namely those who with Greg regard Shakespeare as the reviser² of an earlier play, but unlike him believe that the play thus revised is to be seen in the Quarto and Folio texts. Many have from time to time held this theory, but the earliest to work it out in detail, as far as I know, was the young Arthur Symons in an introduction which Furnival commissioned him to write for the Praetorius facsimile of *Titus* (1600), published in 1885. An admirable essay, full of discriminating aesthetic criticism, it has been unduly neglected in this country, while American writers appear to be unaware of its very existence, which is the more surprising, that from the dawn of the present century the theory of a revised *Titus* has been specially favoured by Shakespeareans on the other side of the Atlantic. Among

¹ The theory originally stated in 1908 on pp. 161–2 of the Commentary on *Henslowe's Diary*, was restated with slight modifications eleven years later in *The Modern Language Review*, xiv, 322–3.

² By 'revision' I understand at least *some* reorganization and/or rearrangement of dramatic material; the addition of lines here and there such as Ravenscroft (and Malone) contemplated cannot be so described.

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American expositions¹ that of Professor T. M. Parrott, published in *The Modern Language Review* for January 1919, is at once the most systematic and the most suggestive. Basing his case upon a statistical table of feminine verse-endings, a test of authorship which I must confess inspires me with little confidence,² he goes through the play scene by scene as Symons had done before him, and like Robertson, whose book he has evidently studied carefully, makes considerable use of verbal parallels. In one very important particular, however, he goes far beyond him, and by so doing succeeds in putting his main conclusion completely out of court.

The most astonishing thing about Robertson, who browbeat in the name of 'scientific method' and 'logical procedure' all who differed from him, was his own lack both of science and of logic. Never, for instance, did it seem to occur to him that his collection of parallels from Shakespeare's contemporaries ought to be checked by parallels from Shakespeare's own poems and early plays. It did occur to Parrott; with the interesting result that he found in *Titus Andronicus* enough Shakespearian words, phrases, images and thoughts to constitute, at the lowest, a strong prima facie case for its revision by Shakespeare. And if Dr Greg found this evidence 'hardly completely convincing',³ that was, I fancy, due to the fact that he overlooked one significant feature about it, perhaps because Parrott himself seems to have overlooked it also, viz. that a large proportion of the parallels come from *The Rape of Lucrece*. Now it is obvious that parallels between *Titus*, which was being published in 1594 and being

¹ As my Notes show, I am also indebted to two valuable articles in *Studies in Philology*: A. K. Gray's *Shakespeare and 'Titus Andronicus'* (July 1928) and J. S. G. Bolton's *'Titus Andronicus': Shakespeare at Thirty* (April 1933).

² See head-note to 5. 1.

³ *The Modern Language Review*, XIV, 322.

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played at the beginning of that year, and *Venus and Adonis*, which was entered in the Stationers' Register on 18 April 1593, striking as are some of those adduced by Professor Parrott, might be explained as plagiarism by the dramatist. But with *Lucrece*, which was entered in the Register on 9 May 1594, i.e. more than three months later than the earliest recorded performances of *Titus*, the position is different. A long poem of over 1850 lines, already promised in the Dedication of *Venus and Adonis* a year before, it must have been nearing completion by the time *Titus* was produced and could thus have owed little or nothing to the play. On the other hand, it was quite impossible for the play to owe anything to the poem, except on one condition: that the same author was concerned in the writing of both. In a word, the parallels from *Lucrece* put the case for a Shakespearian authorship or revision of *Titus* very high indeed.

II. *Shakespeare shows his hand*

In discussing evidence from parallels Miss Byrne rightly insists upon the importance of quality. 'Mere verbal parallelism', she writes, thus making nonsense of many pages of Robertson's many books, 'is of almost no value in comparison with parallelism of thought, coupled with some verbal parallelism.'¹ If she will admit parallelism of situation or theme as an alternative to, or extension of, parallelism of thought, a large proportion of the parallels between *Titus* and Shakespeare's poems and early plays pass her test. It may be said that, thus interpreted, the test loses value as far as *Lucrece* is concerned owing to the fact that the central situations in poem and play are identical. It was, I suspect, this identity which first attracted Shakespeare to the play, or suggested to others he might with advantage be

¹ *The Library* (4th ser.), XIII, 24.

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engaged to work upon it. But there are detailed similarities in *Lucrece* apart from this, and plenty of such similarities in the early plays; while once parallels of high quality have been found in sufficient number to establish identity of authorship, parallels of lower quality become interesting too. Following in Professor Parrott's footsteps and with the help of Bartlett and Schmidt, I have collected so large a quantity of Shakespearian parallels that to record them all in the Notes would greatly exceed the limits of this edition. Only a small proportion can accordingly be given there.¹ Yet, even so, the impartial reader will, I think, find the evidence overwhelming. Indeed, the following examples selected for their brevity should prove enough for most.² They are, I claim, mostly parallels of high quality, exhibiting as they frequently do, identity of cadence, as well as similarity of situation, thought, image or phrase. In any event here, as an earnest of the evidence in the Notes, are a number of Shakespeare's finger-prints as they show themselves in almost every scene of the last four acts.

Titus, 2. 1. 35: And that my sword upon thee shall approve.

Shrew, 1. 2. 174: And that my deeds shall prove.

Titus, 2. 1. 53-4: (*Aaron*). For shame, put up.
Demetrius. Not I, till I have sheathed
My rapier in his bosom

K. John, 4. 3. 79-80: (*Bastard*). Put it up again.
Salisbury. Not till I sheathe it in a
murderer's skin.

Titus, 2. 1. 89: Better than he have worn Vulcan's badge.

L.L.L. 5. 2. 281: Well, better wits have worn plain
statute-caps.

¹ Unfortunately too, limitations of space made it impossible to quote all but a very few at length. But the references are there for the reader to turn up for himself.

² For longer and more complicated instances see notes 2. 3. 201-4; 2. 4. 48-51; 3. 1. 96-7; 3. 2. 16-20.

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- Titus*, 2. 3. 145: Even at thy teat thou hadst thy tyranny.
Rom. 1. 3. 68: Thou hadst sucked wisdom from thy teat.
- Titus*, 2. 3. 148: What! wouldst thou have me prove myself a bastard?
- Merch.* 4. 1. 69: What, wouldst thou have a serpent sting thee twice?
- Titus*, 2. 3. 212: A chilling sweat o'er-runs my trembling joints.
- Ric. III*, 5. 3. 181: Cold fearful drops stand on my trembling flesh.
- Titus*, 2. 3. 256: 'Tis not an hour since I left them there.
K. John, 4. 3. 104: 'Tis not an hour since I left him well.
- Titus*, 2. 4. 3: Write down thy mind, bewray thy meaning so.
- 1 Hen. VI*, 5. 3. 66: I'll call for pen and ink, and write my mind.
- Rom.* 5. 2. 4: Or if his mind be writ, give me his letter.
- Titus*, 3. 1. 54: A wilderness of tigers?
Merch. 3. 1. 115: A wilderness of monkeys.
Lucrece, l. 980: Wilder to him than tigers in their wildness.
- Titus*, 3. 1. 68: What fool hath added water to the sea?
3 Hen. VI, 5. 4. 8: With tearful eyes add water to the sea.
- Titus*, 3. 1. 103-4: Had I but seen thy picture in this plight
 It would have madded me.
- 1 Hen. VI*, 4. 7. 83-4: Were but his picture left amongst you
 here
 It would amaze the proudest of you all.
- Titus*, 3. 1. 233-4: Then give me leave; for losers will have
 leave
 To ease their stomachs with their bitter
 tongues.
- 2 Hen. VI*, 3. 1. 182: But I can give the loser leave to chide.
- Titus*, 3. 2. 24: Why, Marcus, no man should be mad
 but I.
- K. John*, 4. 1. 13: Methinks no body should be sad but I.

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- Titus*, 4. 1. 60: O, why should nature build so foul
a den!
- M.N.D.* 5. 1. 289: O' wherefore, nature, didst thou lions
frame?
- Titus*, 4. 2. 101-2: For all the water in the ocean
Can never turn the swan's black legs to
white.
- Ric. II*, 3. 2. 54: Not all the water in the rough rude sea
Can wash the balm from an anointed
king.
- Titus*, 4. 2. 151: A long-tongued babbling gossip.
Tw. Nt., 1. 5. 277: The babbling gossip of the air.
- Titus*, 4. 3. 45: Marcus, we are but shrubs, no cedars we.
Lucrece, ll. 664-5: The cedar stoops not to the base shrub's
foot,
But low shrubs wither at the cedar's
root.
- Titus*, 4. 4. 83: Is the sun dimmed, that gnats do fly
in it?
- Errors*, 2. 2. 30: When the sun shines let foolish gnats
make sport.
- Titus*, 5. 1. 57-8: If thou wilt not, befall what may befall,
I'll speak no more but 'Vengeance rot
you all!'
- L.L.L.* 5. 2. 866: A twelvemonth? well, befall what will
befall,
I'll jest a twelvemonth in a hospital.
- Titus*, 5. 2. 1: Thus, in this strange and sad habiliment.
Shrew, 4. 3. 172: Even in these honest mean habiliments.
- Titus*, 5. 2. 191: your unhallowed dam.
Merch. 4. 1. 136: thy unhallowed dam.
- Titus*, 5. 3. 13: The venomous malice of my swelling
heart.
- 1 Hen. VI*, 3. 1. 26: From envious malice of thy swelling
heart.
- Titus*, 5. 3. 76: Do shameful execution on herself.
Ric. II, 2. 1. 66: Hath made a shameful conquest of
itself.

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Titus, 5. 3. 82: To love-sick Dido's sad attending ear,
Rom. 2. 2. 167: Like softest music to attending ears.

Finally, here are a dozen common Shakespearian turns of speech which I happen to have noticed in *Titus*: 'mannerisms' it would be wrong to call them, so natural and unobtrusive are they, being for the most part little flourishes of a lively character at the beginning of speeches, lines or phrases. That they are individually peculiar to Shakespeare I do not of course maintain, though I think some are. What is suggestive is that all should be found in *Titus*.

(i) The cumulative succession of phrases or epithets beginning with 'this' or 'that':¹

Titus, 2. 1. 22-3: 'this queen...this siren'; *K. John*, 2. 1. 577 ff. (The Bastard on Commodity); *L.L.L.* 3. 1. 178-9 (Berowne on Cupid); *Ric. II*, 2. 1. 40-51 (Gaunt on England).

(ii) Sentences beginning 'Now will I':

Titus, 2. 3. 190: 'Now will I hence'; cf. 2. 3. 206; 3. 1. 306; 4. 4. 109; 5. 2. 132; *M.N.D.* 5. 1. 191; *Rom.* 2. 2. 189.

(iii) 'Even' (generally used for emphasis) at the beginning of a line:

Titus, 2. 3. 162: 'Even for his sake am I pitiless'; cf. 2. 3. 145; 3. 1. 259, 275; 4. 4. 103; 5. 1. 86; 5. 2. 56, 115; *Merch.* 2. 6. 45: 'Even in the lovely garnish of a boy'; *A.Y.L.* 2. 7. 57; *3 Hen. VI*, 1. 2. 34. Very common in Sh.

(iv) 'Some say' (to introduce a piece of beast-lore):

Titus, 2. 3. 153; *Rom.* 3. 5. 29, 31.

¹ First pointed out by A. K. Gray, *Studies in Philology*, xxv, 303 ff.

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(v) 'As who should (would) say' = as if to say:

Titus, 4. 2. 121; 4. 4. 20; *V.A.* 1. 280; *Lucr.* 1. 320; *Merch.* 1. 1. 93; 1. 2. 44; *Shrew*, 4. 3. 13; *Ric.* II, 5. 4. 8; *1 Hen. VI*, 1. 4. 93; 4. 7. 27; *2 Hen. VI*, 4. 7. 99. Seldom in later plays.

(vi) 'Nothing so...':

Titus, 2. 3. 156: 'Nothing so kind, but something pitiful'; *2 Hen. VI*, 5. 2. 65; *1 Hen. IV*, 3. 1. 132; 5. 1. 38.

(vii) 'Now' (as introductory flourish to a mild oath):

Titus, 2. 1. 61: 'Now, by the gods'; *K. John*, 1. 1. 259; 2. 1. 397; *Ric. III*: 'Now, by St Paul' (*passim*).

(viii) 'But, soft':

Titus, 5. 3. 116. Very common in Sh.

(ix) 'That ever...' (to express indignation or surprise):

Titus, 3. 1. 249; *Rom.* 3. 2. 63; *1 Hen. IV*, 2. 4. 96.

(x) 'Why, there's a...' or 'Here's a...' (Fr. *voilà*, *voici*):

Titus, 4. 2. 116, 119; *Shrew*, 5. 2. 180; *K. John*, 2. 1. 455, 457.

(xi) 'What a...!':

Titus, 4. 2. 25: 'Now, what a thing it is to be an ass!'; *V.A.* 1. 343: 'what a sight it was!'; *Err.* 5. 1. 269: 'Why, what an intricate impeach is this!'

(xii) '...cannot (or 'shall not') choose but':

Titus, 4. 3. 74-5: 'he should not choose but'. Bartlett gives sixteen instances of this idiom under 'choose'.

The foregoing parallels should establish the fact that Shakespeare was deeply involved in the received text.

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They will be followed up, as I have said, by a wealth of further parallels in the Notes, while at the head of each scene therein I have summarized my impressions as to Shakespeare's contribution in detail. But the reader will already, I hope, be prepared to agree that the external evidence for Shakespeare's hand in the play has been corroborated by the internal. The problem cannot, however, be left there. Like Symons, Parrott, and many other critics, I do not find a single convincing trace of Shakespeare in the whole of Act 1, which runs to close upon 500 lines. Who then wrote that? In the next section I bring forward fresh evidence to support—I would claim, to demonstrate—the theory, which J. M. Robertson, though refusing to see the hand of Shakespeare anywhere, went some way towards proving, viz. that we must look to George Peele for the authorship, not only of Act 1, but of most of the basic text upon which Shakespeare worked. In other words, I hold with the Americans that Shakespeare did not invent *Titus*, he revised it. And, as I shall show in the Notes, he must have worked over the last four acts pretty thoroughly, so that Meres and the editors of the Folio were fully within their rights in calling it his. The aesthetic responsibility for it is therefore his also. But that raises problems which must be postponed to the final section.

III. *Peele also shows his hand*

The verse of Act 1 has a certain stateliness, not inappropriate to what is in part an imperial election and in part a funeral service. It is even at times capable of dignity and grace, together with genuine poetic feeling, as in the solemn prayer (ll. 150–6) with which Titus consigns his dead sons to the ancestral tomb, or in the plea of Tamora (ll. 104–20) on behalf of her first-born. Clearly, the author, if we assume the act to be by a

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single writer, was no hack dramatist. On the other hand, one has only to examine the quality of his mind, the fabric of his verse, and the composition of his sentences, to feel certain that, whoever he may have been, his name was not Shakespeare. One or two simple generalizations may be hazarded about Shakespeare's verse, which are not, I think, likely to be questioned by any who have considered it seriously. First of all, it is never empty. No doubt, the later the play, at any rate up to and including the great tragedies, the greater the pregnancy of its style. Yet even the verse of his earliest plays, of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *Richard III*, and *King John* for example, is richer in content than that of his contemporaries at that period, not excluding Marlowe. Secondly, it is not to be analysed. Those familiar with it may feel confident of being able to recognize the Shakespearian accent; but if taxed for their reasons they will be hard put, seeing that his style is organic, not mechanical, that is to say it will only yield to the analysis of a chemistry not yet discovered. And its third characteristic, which follows from the second, is its freshness and variety.¹ Lastly, summing up and transcending all the others, there is its vital dramatic quality. The form and movement of the verse is determined by the individuality of the character speaking it; it *sounds* like the utterance of a human voice; more than that, the mind it expresses appears to contain many thoughts over and above those which its

¹ That words are repeated at times in *Titus* in the same sentence (*v.* notes 2. 3. 99, 104, 260; 3. 1. 151-6; 4. 1. 25, etc.) is a sure sign that Shakespeare was writing in great haste; and such inadvertences are quite different from the mechanical repetitions to be noted shortly. As to 'freshness' nothing in Shakespeare is more marked than the freshness and vividness of his imagery. The images are not always original; he may borrow them from Spenser or others. But they are always fresh-seen and new-minted.

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creator permits the audience to overhear; and this even when it runs into the patterns and antithetical curvetings his Pegasus delighted in at this stage.

It would be difficult to imagine a greater contrast to all this than the verse of the first act of *Titus*. Perhaps its most obvious feature is monotony, 'deadly monotony' Parrott calls it. Most critics have remarked upon its metrical flatness. But it is dramatically flat also, since all the characters speak with the same voice, frame their sentences after similar patterns, and even borrow words and phrases from each other. Almost every speech, for instance, during the first half of the act, i.e. for some 240 lines, begins with a vocative and continues with a verb in the imperative mood. Saturninus opens the play with

Noble patricians, patrons of my right.

And when Bassianus follows on, seven lines later, like this:

Romans, friends, followers, favourers of my right,

he seems an auctioneer, outbidding his rival by one alliterative word. The speech he then delivers is, moreover, a bag of tricks, some of which are used several times in other parts of the act.

Romans, friends, followers, favourers of my right,
If ever Bassianus, Caesar's son,
Were gracious in the eyes of royal Rome,
Keep then this passage to the Capitol,
And suffer not dishonour to approach
The imperial seat, to virtue consecrate,
To justice, continence, and nobility:
But let desert in pure election shine,
And, Romans, fight for freedom in your choice.

The words 'of my right' are not only repeated from l. 1, but 'right' in the same sense and as a terminal word, is found again at ll. 41, 56 and 279. Further,

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the tiresome rhetorical device of a character referring to himself in the third person and by name occurs more than a dozen times elsewhere in the act. And we need only set

consecrate

To justice, continence and nobility

beside

consecrate

My sword, my chariot, and my prisoners

in ll. 248–9, to see the quality of the mind we are dealing with.¹ But we find the most striking repetition at ll. 428–31, where Tamora in a briefer speech reproduces the very structure of Bassianus' nine lines and in part his words, even concluding, as he does, with a line commencing 'And' and reiterating the vocative with which the speech opens:

My worthy lord, *if ever* Tamora
Were gracious in those princely eyes of thine,
 Then hear me speak indifferently for all;
 And at my suit, sweet, pardon what is past.

It may be noted too, in passing, that the construction, 'if ever... were' followed by an imperative, crops up again in ll. 107–8, and that 'then' is a favourite conjunction of the writer (cf. ll. 135, 185, 228, 439). Nor is all this the peculiarity of a single speech. Once we begin noting the echoes and repetitions in Act 1, there is no end to them. For a sample: the words 'gracious' and 'return' become obsessions, and are used half a dozen times or more in the first 170 lines; 'in arms' or 'with arms' occurs at the end of ll. 2, 30, 32, 38 and 196; the Goths are three times described as having been 'yoked' by Titus (ll. 30, 69, 111), and his sons twice as 'alive and dead' (ll. 81, 123); 'appeasing' the 'shadows' of the dead is also twice spoken of (ll. 100, 126); and the tomb to which they are consigned is called

¹ See note 1. 1. 14–15; and cf. 2. 1. 92.