

"rejects the corporate media system in which film and video elsewhere in the movie seem so inextricably implicated" (2002b: 175).

In an important essay that sought both to sum up and move beyond state-of-the-art Shakespeare-on-film criticism ca. 1993, Graham Holderness observed that "the most successful attempts to capture [the] elusive, shifting complexity of the Shakespeare text are to be found in the deconstructive experiments of 'underground' cinema" which "offer some degree of filmic equivalent to the modern theoretically activated Shakespearean text" (1993: 74). Lanier and others have noted "the contradictory position that Almereyda's own film seeks to occupy" (2002b: 177) and "the institutional-double-bind faced by the contemporary Shakespeare filmmaker, who is confronted by the demand to produce a Shakespeare tailored to . . . [global media market] protocols epitomized by the action film" (2002b: 176). The video-within-the-film produced by this Hamlet – like Hawke's delivery of the "To be" speech against the backdrop of action-videos – negotiates such contradictions by confronting them head-on. Construed as an experiment in "underground" or *grunge* cinema, Hawke's *Mousetrap* presents itself in the anarchic, anything-oppositional-goes manner of the anti-globalist demonstrator or "play-it-like-you-don't-know-how" grunge band, whose message is legible enough to insiders but opaque, inchoate, or repellent to outsiders. It is a deliberate "rough-cut" that (again like Hawke's "To be" speech) conscientiously rejects the formal consolations of the well-mannered or well-crafted art-object. If Hamlet's goal is not to transcend mediating technologies but to inhabit them in a way that satisfies his need for self-expression and is transmissible enough to those who speak the same language, then the solution to the social and cognitive demands of memory technologies may just be the composite work-around of the inspired improviser or resourceful amateur.

Once the memory of Old Hamlet's death cycles through the shared venue of cinematic audition, its powerful affects may extend in turn to private modes of audition: the scene of Claudius, in his limo, repenting his rank offense in front of a small TV screen. For such purposes, Almereyda suggests, video allows us to receive and process content in intimate ways. Yet cinema provides the cognitive grammar that organizes that content in socially legible terms and produces it as shared knowledge. The claim is particularly clear in Hamlet's final moments. There video supplies the grainy, black-and-white final memories of Hamlet dying, products of intimate collection, sorting, and recollection. But those memories are also shots from the film: meaningful because conflated with and recycled through our cinematic audition. This is, of course, also the case with respect to Hamlet's film-within-the-film, which however jumbled or juvenile it may seem, plays back to us as plausibly as Ophelia's fantasized escape from her father. That fantasy, of course anticipates her "real" leap into the decorative pool later in the film. Though no one else *in* the film quite feels or hears the pain of its main characters, Almereyda makes certain that we do.

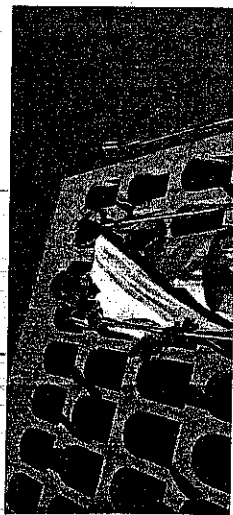
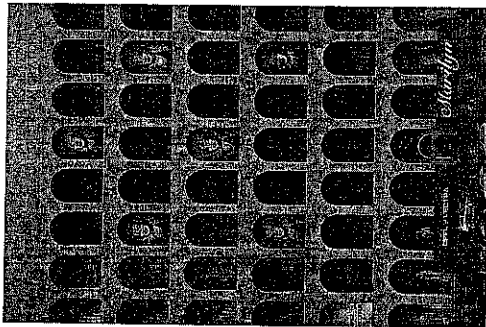
4 Colliding Time and Space in Taymor's *Titus*

- allusion
- interpolation
- citational environments
- conceptual art
- ghosting surrogation
- new media
- expressionist film

An elaborately designed adaptation of *Titus Andronicus*, Julie Taymor's *Titus* (1999) is set in a spectacularly "virtual" version of the Eternal City, Rome, assembled out of the artifacts of 2000 years of Western culture. In this early revenge tragedy, Shakespeare had already synthesized fragments of history, myth, and invented tradition reaching back to rituals of human sacrifice (that were never practiced in ancient Rome) and forward to Rome's Germanic wars. But Taymor casts an even wider net of cultural reference and visual imagery over her adaptation. She fabricates a citational environment in which postmodern iconography and the oversized ambitions of fascist Italy superimpose themselves on ancient Rome's storied foundations and Shakespeare's play alike. *Titus* was filmed in sites as varied as a well-preserved Roman coliseum in Croatia and carefully assembled studio and outdoor sets at Fellini's famed Cinécittà. Yet it pays a disproportionate amount of visual and dramatic attention to a centerpiece of Fascist architecture: the monumental "stage-set" Mussolini commissioned to advance his efforts to model a modern Italian state on imperial Rome, now known as the "Colosseo Quadrato" or "square coliseum," in the EUR (Esposizione Universale Romana) quarter of Rome (figure 4.1).¹

Taymor attends so closely to the "square coliseum" not only to link the authoritarian patterns of the 1930s to those of ancient Rome, but to work iconographic variations on them from the point of view of the present. (Peter Greenaway made similar use of this site in *The Belly of an Architect* [1987] and we find a related impulse in Philip Greenspan's photograph of the iconic Marilyn Monroe.)² Architecture and iconography are not the only media Taymor deploys to draw connections or dissolve differences between the modern and ancient worlds. She also exploits the anachronistic setting of Shakespeare's play – an indistinct time dominated by barbaric religious ritual, authoritarian militarism, and sexual excess – to produce the impression of atavistic resurgence by positioning her film at an indeterminate moment that crosses the ancient past with the post-apocalyptic future.³

Explaining why she superimposed the architectural excesses and authoritarian stylings of Mussolini's Italy on Shakespeare's own composite version of Rome, Taymor claims that "Modern Rome, built on the ruins of ancient Rome, offered the perfect stratification for the setting of the film. I wanted to blend and collide time, to create a singular period that juxtaposed elements of ancient barbaric ritual with

Colosseo
enaway4.1B Colosseo Quadrato
in *Titus*4.1C Colosseo
Marilyn Monroe

familiar, contemporary attitude and style" (Taymor 2000: 178). Taymor elaborates on these temporal collisions by contending that "the time of the film is from 1 to 2000 AD," and that "the film represents the last 2000 years of man's inhumanity to man" (DVD disc 1, Director's Commentary). Taken together, these comments effectively conflate the conceptual postmodernity Taymor brings to Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* with an approach to the play's content that is awedly humanistic. In them, Taymor seeks to reconcile her commitment to a stylization that floats free of a specific ethical or political persuasion with a stance toward behaviors ("man's inhumanity to man") designed to engage our ethical interest and attention. Taymor's comments thus bring into focus contradictions that are defining features of her project and that make *Titus* both a powerful and troubling viewing experience.⁴ Combining the affectless irony and sleek stylings of the contemporary cinematic, visual art, and theatrical avant-garde with the visual and auditory excess of a Hollywood blockbuster or horror film, *Titus* moralizes against violent and predatory behavior that it more often seems to revel in than revile (Burt 2002a: 312–13; McCandless 2002: 489).⁵

Like Fellini (who exerts as much influence on Taymor's cinematic imagination as does Shakespeare), Taymor has a quintessentially postmodern interest in pastiche, the practice of blending diverse artistic materials.⁶ *Titus* not only blends and "collides" the architectural styles of ancient Rome and Mussolini's Rome, but juxtaposes these with other symbolic designs. The scarring of Tamora (Jessica Lange) and Aaron the Moor (Harry Lennix), for example, not only mark their ethnic difference from the "ancient" Romans but resonate with the contemporary vogue

for tattoos and body art in a way that makes them seem a different, more compelling form of outsider. "Unmarked" Romans like Titus and his family are, by comparison, figured as solidly, even regressively, traditional. Taymor mixes such specifically weighted markers with designs drawn promiscuously from the domains of high art and popular culture that operate more loosely, as floating signifiers: they take on new meanings in each visual frame, call attention to the way they make meaning, and mean whatever a viewer decides they mean (Barthes 1977: 39). Indeed, *Titus* fabricates its idiosyncratic design concepts out of unusually mixed props, behaviors, and citational environments; horse-drawn chariots and tanks, swords and sports cars, human sacrifice and video games, captive Goths (the tribe) and heavy-metal "Goths," orgiastic sex and plastic baggies – the iconographic bric-a-brac of surrealist fantasies, American pop culture, transvestism, pornography, and the phantasmagoric film-imagery of Fellini.

As with any strong design initiative, particularly one as interested as hers is in symbolism, Taymor's risks reducing the film to an array of too prominent signs and markers. We may come away from it remembering only the outsized throne that makes Saturninus look like a spoiled boy and which, perhaps, plays too glibly with the Fascist associations of Alan Cumming's *Cabaret* look; the bleached hair and contemporary "Goth" looks of Tamora's androgynous sons; the color-coded costumes and backdrops; Lavinia's porcelain prettiness, which Taymor likens to that of Grace Kelly and later overlays with allusions to Marilyn Monroe and Degas's "Little Dancer, Aged Fourteen." Outside of the conceptual added New York art and theater scene where this convention is rooted, it may all seem too calculated and self-reflexive.⁷

Responses to the film that concentrate on its preoccupation with symbolic signs and markers, stylized sex, and violence, and the attention-getting "look" of its architectural settings, tend to see it as an extraordinarily beautiful but hollow cinematic shell, or worse (Burt 2002a: 295–300). These are important but partial observations that obscure the full range of uses to which Taymor puts *Titus Andronicus*. Taymor's dramatically sustained interpolations – both her explicit scenic additions to the playtext and her interventions in how that text gets cinematically expressed – do more than exploit blank spaces in the Shakespearean playtext to dramatic effect. They adapt Shakespearean stage-practice to the multi-mediated language of postmodern film-art and technology in a way that changes "the entire infrastructure of the art-form" (Grigely 1995: 100).⁸ In what follows, therefore, we approach *Titus* as an opportunity for exploring the kinds of viewing and interpretive strategies called for by what gets "added to" a Shakespeare play in screen adaptations, concentrating on several strands of Taymor's allusions and interpolations.

In *Titus*, Taymor seeks a cinematic style poised somewhere between the immersive possibilities of experimental theater (think of her career-long use of masks, puppets, iconic movement, surreal and expressionist settings) on the one hand and of new media on the other.⁹

As Peter Donaldson has shown, *Titus* is one of many recent films that experiment with the visual and narrative codes of video gaming and virtual world-building (Donaldson 2006). We take our cue from this experimentation, approaching Taymor's allusive structures as interactive activities in which reception and adaptation are two sides of the same process. According to Donaldson, Taymor's virtual Rome resembles the play-spaces of interactive games, where the ethical spectator "is immersed in the story world, assumes a role within it, and is able to make choices or intervene in ways that may alter the narrative's outcome" (2006: 457). But what happens when the film's allusive structures and the narrative in which they are embedded fail to signal clearly the choices or interventions this "ethical spectator" should make? And how "ethical" can one's choices be when Taymor's aim is to "unsettle" rather than relieve the spectator of uncertainty?

Allusion is of its very nature an artistic transaction controlled as much by audience as by artist. It is a highly unstable device precisely because it invites readers, viewers, or listeners to draw on "external" associations that may range from the widely shared to the highly idiosyncratic. It is likely, therefore, to produce varied, even contradictory responses (far more varied, indeed, than the highly routinized menus offered by interactive games). Accordingly, Taymor's free-floating allusiveness invites readings that are, to borrow Richard Burt's phrases, both "Shakespeare-centric" – concerned with what gets done *to* the play – and "Shakespeare-eccentric" – concerned with what gets accomplished *by* means of the play (Burt 2006). In this chapter we aim to balance Shakespeare-centric and -eccentric readings by following Taymor's allusions in the (sometimes contradictory) directions they take us and other critics. As we pursue these different interpretive paths, we seek to account for as wide as possible a range of reactions to Taymor's allusive imagery.

Stretching the limits of both Shakespeare-centric and -eccentric readings can be a lesson to the critic about what constitutes the externals and essentials of a work, whether it be a film or a playtext. A useful case in point is the bleached-and-black "Goth" look Taymor gives to Tamora's sons. Their leather and video games may seem as gratuitous as any design choice in the film. Yet the use of "Goth" to mark a subculture (in this case young, crude, and violent) calls attention to a Renaissance stereotype, the barbaric northerner, that is crucial to Shakespeare's play. In marking this stereotype, Taymor foregrounds ethnic divisions that might otherwise be invisible to modern audiences, who are more likely to register skin-color (in this case Moor vs European) as the primary sign of difference that matters, and to see the blond, northern Goths and dark-haired, southern Romans as uniformly "white." The extent to which *Titus* responds in this way to the inter-ethnic and anachronistic conjunctions of Moors, Goths, and Romans in Shakespeare's play reminds us, in turn, that we have not exited the circuit of ethnic rivalries, religious conflicts, and imperial anxieties that beset both his and our own contemporary political scene.

This political, or more strictly speaking, humanistic unconscious of *Titus* rises most obviously to the surface in its closing shots, when the walls that appear to enclose Titus's climactic bloody banquet suddenly dissolve and the dinner table is resituated in an unusually well-preserved provincial Roman coliseum in Croatia. The closing actions proceed before a silent audience of latter-day Croatians whose witnessing of this primal event constitutes an act of surrogation, "an ambivalent replaying" (Roach 1996: 2–3) of fraternal and tribal slaughters in the Balkans, which effectively bridges the distance between the year one and late 1998 when this scene was shot. It is here that Taymor stages her last, and for some, most questionable interpolation, having young Lucius (Osheen Jones) rescue Tamora and Aaron's son and carry him outside the walls of the coliseum – and, by extension, outside the bounds of a history that expands and contracts but offers neither relief nor escape from established patterns of mutual predation. That this action takes place as the elder Lucius (Angus Macfadyen) reiterates the play's last lines – an order to "throw [Tamora] forth to beasts and birds of prey" – explains both the utopian aspects of this final interpolation ("utopian" in that it gestures towards an ethos situated outside the bounds of history and any specific political persuasion) and why it might well be preferred to a more professedly "faithful" reiteration of the Shakespearean text.

The use of young Lucius as participant-witness throughout the film's unraveling is the most pronounced and sustained of the many "additions" Taymor makes to the playtext, and the one that has the most obvious ethical, if not quite political, valence. It is also the interpolation that has generated the most hostile reactions, even among avowedly postmodernist critics. It makes sense, therefore, to begin a discussion of Taymor's interpolations by focusing closely on the symbolic spaces through which Lucius moves and the different kinds of "ambivalent replaying" he models for the audience.

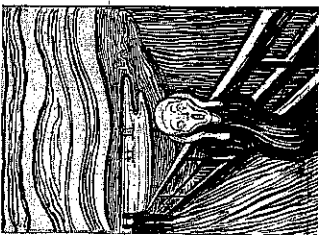
Recycling Rome

The Roman coliseum that frames the opening and closing moments of *Titus* is, like the settings of *Titus Andronicus*, a dislocated memory of Rome, weathered by different periods and uses. Indeed, the Romans of *Titus Andronicus* are not historically specific but composites blended and collided from different classical sources – Seneca, Ovid, Virgil – and different periods of Roman history.¹⁰ Because our idea of "Rome" now regularly incorporates these many fragments of time and space (Rome as orgy, military power, and empire, Rome as both forum for civilized political debate and arena for barbaric entertainment) we may miss the explicit inventedness of this Shakespearean setting. Rome is not so much a specific location or city but an environment, a memory, and a set of texts for recycling.

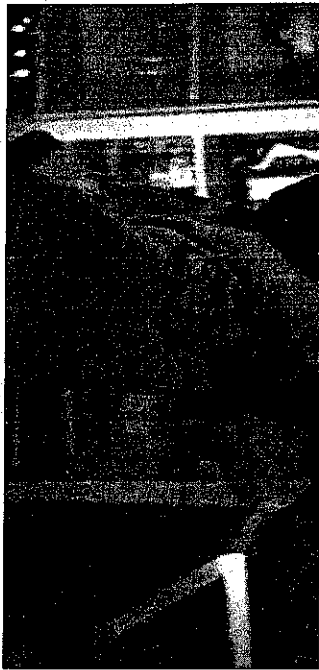
Taymor's more dramatically sustained interpolations reiterate the playtext's indeterminate fracturing of time and space in a way that lets

us see Rome in this way, as always relocated, translated, and reinvented. As we have observed in chapter 2, all works exist as multiple reiterations, enacted in new environments; each reiteration remakes and replaces the prior text in the series that constitutes the "work" (Grigely 1995: 99). Taymor's reiteration of Shakespeare's composite Rome foregrounds the essential ambivalences in this process by which classic texts are continually "unmade (as an object) and remade (as a text and as memory)" (Grigely 1995: 33). Taymor's particular interest involves the tensions internal to this process of surrogation, the way in which each performance aspires "both to embody and to replace" the text it performs (Roach 1996: 3). The coliseum in which the "real" action of the play begins evokes these different possibilities of performance: sometimes utopian, sometimes comic or farcical, and sometimes tragic in the ways they appropriate the authority of Rome. As Donaldson observes, this open-air enclosure evokes among other things: gladiatorial combat; Greek theater; the Globe theater; a World Wrestling Federation wrestling ring; European experimental theater dedicated to collapsing the "fourth wall," "the many stadiums that have been used as sites for political detention, interrogation and execution in the last decades;" and "such simulated environments as historical video games or forms of interactive virtual cinema" (2006: 457).

The transitional figure with whom we move between these various surrogates of Rome, who is the focus of both uncanny and subversive reiteration, is the young Lucius. Taymor deploys Lucius in a manner that recalls Derek Jarman's use of the young Edward, the future Edward III, in his 1991 film-version of Marlowe's *Edward II*, a work to which Taymor's film seems deeply, if silently, indebted. As in the Jarman film, the Boy (in the persona of young Lucius) quietly shadows the actions and activities of the film's protagonists. Serving variously as companion, witness, interrogator, and mirror, he reflects the twists and turns of their fortunes, and the swings of their moods and attitudes. Taymor often positions young Lucius in purely visual patches of unscripted scenes where he functions less to advance the plot than to provide a reflection on it. In this he resembles Jarman's young Edward, who wanders outside the castle walls at night to silently witness a circle of naked men engaging in what looks like a rugby scrum. Also, like young Edward, young Lucius emerges at other times as an antidote or hybridized alternative to the manically vengeful energies that destroy both his family and their opponents. In a remarkably suggestive moment, for example, young Lucius enters a workshop that would appear to specialize in the manufacture of artfully contrived wooden prostheses, and returns with a pair of wooden hands that he gives to Lavinia (Laura Fraser). (Taymor assembled these props from a warehouse where dismantled carvings of saints and other figures employed in Neapolitan nativity scenes are stored between seasonal displays.) While the scene does little to advance the plot, it conveys young Lucius's active sympathy for his disabled cousin, which we will later see



4.2 Munch's "The Scream", the Boy's silent scream



extended to Aaron's child, and an effort to compensate her for the lost "effects" of her hands. At the same time it provides an unsettling insight into how thriving an enterprise a prosthetics workshop might prove in a world so abundant in acts of arbitrary terror and mutilation.¹¹

The composite figure of the Boy/Young Lucius is perhaps most striking for the way in which he crosses between fictional spaces, both deliberately and by acts of imagination. Those imaginative acts are not initially presented as restorative. In the dramatically unscripted "induction" to the film proper, we find the Boy playing with wild and destructive abandon in a kitchen filled with all manner of toy soldiers and model weaponry. His headgear, a paper bag "helmet," suggests his childish emulation of the "real" soldiers into whose orbit he will soon tumble. The helmet is also a mask, possibly an allusion to the child serial killer in John Carpenter's *Halloween* (1978; Donaldson 2006). Yet in Taymor's characteristic style none of these allusions remains stable. The helmeted figure quickly transforms from an agent of terror into an emblem of terror as the child presses his hands to his ears and the paper face crumples – a reference to Edward Munch's "The Scream" (1893).

In the context of the film's ending, the Boy's abduction into the frighteningly "real" war-torn world of *Titus* to the ghostly applause of invisible spectators implies some broadly ethical plan that will effect a marked change in young Lucius himself – who, as he walks forth out of the film's frame, surely can no longer think innocently (or playfully) about man's inhumanity to man. Taymor observes that "the journey of the young boy from childhood innocence to passive witness and finally to knowledge, wisdom, compassion, and choice" operates as the film's "counterpoint to Shakespeare's dark tale of vengeance" (Taymor 2000: 185). Indeed, young Lucius functions as the virtual "eyes" of the film, and becomes the medium through which we ourselves witness, and may also decide to exit from, what the film constructs as history.¹² Taymor clearly conceives this final interpolation as a way of re-purposing what is otherwise resistant and unredeemable in Shakespeare's play – its apparent commitment to an honor culture that can see no response to injury but violence. Young Lucius's view of a way out must be clearer than ours, however,

since the camera follows his exit at a distance, zooming in with an excommunicating slowness that never quite catches up with him.

Yet any tidy narrative about the child's (and viewer's) maturation is complicated by the way in which the induction reminds us that play (in every sense of the word) is a kind of practice, rehearsal, imitation, and preparation – an essential learning process for all human behaviors, including violent ones. Initially, this child's "innocence" is also a state of profoundly uncontrolled (perhaps traumatic?) mimesis of the TV that illuminates this first scene and the violence that erupts from outside into it. Taymor's setting of this scene in a generic 1950s-era kitchen, where the Boy plays with "real" as opposed to "virtual" toy soldiers, pointedly functions as another way of framing an alleged "age" of innocence as also one of violent rehearsal. It even suggests that young Lucius's violent play may have generated the martial parade of the clay soldiers in which he is now enveloped. As Donaldson observes, the Boy's abduction into the performance space of the amphitheater, where he is held aloft by his captor/rescuer like a trophy, underscores his vulnerability to the violent entertainments in which he participates – he is made vulnerable, here, in a way that resembles emerging forms of "viewer decision" (2006: 461–2).

Interpolation as Balancing Act

This first interpolation alerts us that Taymor's additions will not only fulfill the playtext by presenting what is unrepresentable there; they will offer a counter-narrative, and even critique, of destructively hierarchical and martial perspectives that the play (as an unusually lurid avatar of Senecan revenge tragedy) fails to challenge. Indeed, another way of conceptualizing the politics of Taymor's interpolations is to see them as an attempt to bring a kind of clarifying balance to her representation of the film's competing atrocities (as well as to the play's privileging of Titus's patriarchal hold on our sympathies). Taymor's film clearly sides with Titus's family in its struggle against Tamora and Saturninus, and makes Titus appear (like Lear) a man more sinned against than sinning. But it also attempts to balance the ledger of mutual retribution and vindictiveness. For example, in the first of what Taymor calls her "penny arcade nightmares" (hereafter PANs), which function as both interpolations and extrapolations from the playtext, Taymor has Titus (Anthony Hopkins) and Tamora (Jessica Lange) square off at the foot of the palace stairs in a rigidly blocked face-off, while between and behind them fiery images of the limbs and torso of Tamora's sacrificed son, Alarbus, shift and blend into each other in a powerfully surreal manner.

This first PAN employs Alarbus's dismembered body mainly in the interests of illustration, making it a bridge across which Titus and Tamora will engage in a struggle-to-the-death. Later, however, a second PAN appears to emanate from Titus's own guilty conscience, portraying as it does "Titus's youngest son [Mutius] whom he himself rashly and

wrongly murdered. . . in the form of a sacrificial lamb, evoking the story of Abraham and Isaac" (Taymor 2000: 184). Here in particular we witness a more even-handed approach to the revenge motive than Shakespeare seems to be aiming at in the playtext, as Taymor extrapolates from Shakespeare's own silence on the subject ("the narrative," Taymor notes, "never brings up the event of Mutius' death once it is done") to claim for Titus a nagging "inner torment and guilt" that he does not appear to feel in Shakespeare's play (Taymor 2000: 1984; Burt 2002a: 310).

These PANs might appear to be flashbacks. Yet as David McCandless observes, "the ornate, static staginess of these images renders them implausible as post-traumatic flashbacks" (2002: 501). Clearly, they require another kind of classification, one that respects the terminology Taymor herself uses to describe them but that also references their artificial or manufactured quality. "Penny arcade" evokes the carnivalesque atmosphere of a fair or beachside entertainment zone given over to casual meandering among games of chance, fortune tellers, tattoo parlors, and overstuffed displays of cheap prizes and merchandise. Yet Taymor's PANs also traffic in nightmare content and in icons drawn from the visual archives of high art and religion. Indeed, we consider them a visually overdetermined form of editorial intervention, a kind of expressionist collage that delivers a surplus of meaning. Although these PANs fasten on and replay recently staged events, they do so in a radically displaced manner: scrambling the "post-traumatic" imagery presumably stored in the psyches of the remembering subjects and surrogating it to a series of iconographic metamorphoses beyond the capacity of these characters to generate on their own. The PANs reorganize the space of the screen into the cinematic equivalent of what Taymor calls an "ideograph." The term names the way visual artists add motion and "life" (in this case, images of bleeding, breathing, crying) to a symbolic collection of body parts and objects, arranging them so as to express an idea (Schechner 1999: 38). The PANs also resemble Renaissance emblems, a multimedia art-form composed of visual allegories, Latin mottoes, and English verse glosses. The meaning of an emblem comes from the interaction between its verbal and visual elements; their textual glosses tend to be highly meta-critical, making arguments about how this interaction should be interpreted. Taymor's PANs work in a similarly multi-mediated format that often includes text (e.g., the motto "Mutius" in figure 4.3) and they are equally meta-critical in their emphasis on the damage wrought by the conversion of persons into things – dead bodies, symbols, objects for the use of others.

Both spatially and temporally situated outside the "lived" dramatic reality of the characters, the PANs impinge less on *their* consciousness than they do on *ours*. They thus allow us to speculate freely on the rage Tamora feels but does not clearly show, and on the grief Titus shows but does not necessarily feel. In this respect, these two PANs answer difficulties scholars and students have regularly had with the play. Virtually every action the rigidly authoritarian Titus undertakes in the



Tableau of two
heads and hand

"topp'd" hand into a plastic baggy which he hangs on the mirror of his Maserati as he drives away. The brief, moving encounter between Titus and Lavinia that ensues, which functions like a bridge from one inconsolable injury to another, is followed by an interpolated Felliniesque scene in which the Clown (Dario Ambrosi) and his young, red-haired girl-assistant drive a motorcycle van into Titus's yard.¹⁵ The two set out camp-stools for what looks to be an impromptu theatrical performance, and then, with an alacrity entirely at odds with the reluctant speech spoken by a compassionate messenger in the playtext, "discover" the heads of Titus's sons. These look eerily out from two large "specimen jars," while Titus's severed hand sits pillowed between them on a black velvet cushion like a rarefied piece of anatomical sculpture. (We wonder here about the effects on the infinitely suggestible Taymor of the recent British art-world vogue for the stylized representation of human and animal body parts.) The film lingers very briefly over this tableau, the composition managing to present both the bottled heads and pillowed hand and the stunned witnessing of the Andronici in one abruptly becalmed frame.

Apart from the highly stylized nature of this scene – which Taymor identifies as the first of her PANs that operates on the level of "stark reality" (2000: 184) – several significant substitutions, cuts, and additions are notable here. Taymor substitutes the rough-edged Clown for the play's compassionate Messenger; she cuts three of the latter's most sympathetic lines ("Thy grief their sports! thy resolution mock'd!/ That woe is me to think upon thy woes/More than remembrance of my father's death" (3.1.238–40)); and she adds three harshly barked lines of Latin to the Clown's speech which few auditors would be able to decipher as speech, much less understand.¹⁶ (They read in translation as "The aim of the law is to correct those it punishes, or make others better through the example of the sentence it inflicts, or else to remove evil so that the others can live more peacefully" (Taymor 2000: 107).)

These interpolations transform what may pass in the playtext as an inexplicable bout of arbitrary cruelty into an exercise of cleverly

choreographed terror. Even the surviving residue of compassion in the lines Taymor retains from the Messenger's cropped speech is flattened: "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" (3.1.234–7). The Clown delivers these lines in a detached Brechtian manner as if he is quoting something he, himself, has no stake in. (Characterization is similarly discontinuous here: the role of the Clown is assumed by the figure who "rescues" young Lucius from his exploding kitchen in the film's opening shot, while his young assistant is played by the girl who appears as the trumpet-blowing angel of mercy in the second PAN.) Such slippages or pet-disconnects indicate that the same appropriate drive that animates Taymor's interpolations informs her rendering of the playtext. In this case, for example, the Clown's flat line-reading pointedly unsettles the relationship between what the words say and how they mean. The sympathy that the excised messenger felt for Titus is, as it were, put into quotation marks. It is cited (or re-cited) but not really stated or delivered. It haunts but no longer inhabits its scene of inscription.

In the aftershock of the Clown's horrific delivery, the film jarringly resumes dialogue directly drawn from the playtext, which makes no provision for so sustained or stylized a presentation of the heads of Titus's sons. A revealing consequence of this transition is how slow and stodgy the dramatic interactions of Titus's family seem, so out of keeping with the pace, panache, and black humor of the interpolated material. This is one of several moments in Taymor's film that highlight the virtues and limitations of different representational practices as the multi-layered cross-cuttings of cinema and the more measured, single-framed focus of theater "collide" with one another. The sequence that begins with Aaron's entrance is remarkably fast paced. It starts with Aaron's arrival being glimpsed from an upstairs window of Titus's house by the ubiquitous young Lucius, functioning both as "our eyes" and as the object of our (and Aaron's) gaze. The action speeds up as Titus trustingly responds to Aaron's misleading offer of mercy, with the camera making quick cuts between the wrangling Titus, Marcus, and Lucius before leading us forward into Titus's kitchen. There the beautifully composed, hanging bodies of fowl complement Titus's laying of his hand on the chopping block as Aaron chooses between a pair of poultry scissors and a meat cleaver in playfully silent collaboration with Titus. The frenetically distorted mix of Elliot Goldenthal's jazzy carnival music attends Aaron's quick-paced departure, executed in a face-on tracking shot as Aaron speaks directly into the camera on his return to his Maserati. The same music accompanies the Clown's arrival, evoking a carnivalesque mood that suddenly dissolves upon the display of the severed heads and hand, then devolves to a drama that seems to have no more than a second serving of lamentation to speak for it. The somber mood results not just from the tragic turn of circumstance, but from the cessation of the frenetically comedic camera-work and editing

sustained through the hand-cutting scene. Indeed, it might be said that until or unless Titus and his family themselves begin to generate the kind of manic energy and resourcefulness exercised by Aaron and the Clown in these scenes, they will remain victims of their attachment to older, primarily rhetorical modes of expression and representation.

This embrace of the surreal, improvisational, and absurd begins apace when Titus responds to Marcus's mournful speech by laughing, and then calmly supervises his family's collection of the bottled heads and pedestaled hand, ordering Lavinia to "Bear thou my hand, sweet wench, between thy teeth" (3.1.265, 282). Lavinia's effort here both highlights her own and Titus's loss of "effect" and agency, and signals the beginning of their resurgence. Importantly, that transition begins in their manipulation of the symbols that dominate Roman politics in the play: the heads and hands that figure martial and political authority. When Lavinia carries Titus's hand onstage, and later when she writes with a stick, she redefines her mouth as a grasping part in a way that complicates its earlier identification with the passive bubbling fountain of the scene of her rape. Taking up the severed hand as a supplement to her lost tongue, Lavinia begins to convert herself from a figure of dismemberment into a figure of agency (Rowe 1999: 78). Taymor seems to confirm this sense of gathering agency in the ensuing interpolation where Lucius, motivated by sympathy for Lavinia's plight, retrieves the pair of wooden hands to serve as prostheses for his aunt. While these hands do nothing practical for Lavinia, her donning of them prepares us for the empowerment Lavinia and the other Andronici will feel once the identities of her ravishers are made known and Titus begins (however uncertainly) to make motions towards revenge.

The question of Lavinia's and Titus's renewed agency is sufficiently crucial to Taymor's re-apportionment of the play's dramatic energy to deserve closer scrutiny. The first consequence visited on the Andronici by the violence of Tamora's sons and the villainous manipulations of Aaron is a disabling passivity that employs rhetoric as its preferred mode of expression. We hear this especially in Marcus's overextended "discovery" speech in 2.3, bearing witness to the ravished Lavinia, but also in the moving but ineffectual speech Titus delivers as much to himself as to the Roman senators in what Taymor presents as her "Crossroads" scene (the first half of 3.1 in the playtext). Rhetoric is, of course, the primary dramatic and expressive medium of Shakespeare's play, Marcus and Titus "unpack [their hearts] with words" because that is all they can do under the circumstances. What they require to move to the level of action are scenes of suffering so intense that words formally ordered into elaborate rhetorical displays will no longer serve: or, as Taymor would have it, scenes that bring the shock of disordered perceptions into the orbit of "lived" dramatic experience. Such scenes, provided by Taymor's third and fourth PANs, free the Andronici from the closed circuit of lamentation and resituate them in a dramatic mode more consistent with the playfully ironic, manically purpositive,

and intensely sardonic style that has heretofore been the stock-in-trade of Aaron. In the process, the improvisational authority that has solely been Aaron's to command (on the basis of his dramatic energy, cunning, and imagin-ation) slowly migrates into the compass of the Andronici themselves.

Recall that Taymor categorizes the scene begun by the arrival of the Clown and his assistant as another of her five penny arcade nightmares, but distinguishes this one from all but the last on the basis of its "stark reality." As Taymor observes:

Unlike the other P.A.N.s, which were abstract or symbolic representations of an event or psychic state, this P.A.N. is actually happening. This "still life" P.A.N. signals the turn in the play where the nightmares are now reality and madness can be confused with sanity. Order has been replaced with chaos and the road to justice is paved with revenge. (Taymor 2000: 185)

Although we are at this point still quite far from the moment when Titus will take effectual action against his enemies, Taymor's interpolation turns what seems in the playtext an entirely arbitrary exercise of cruelty on Aaron's part into something much more purposeful and premeditated. However, instead of driving Titus into a deeper state of despair, this nightmare display has the effect of reorienting his response to his enemies. Marcus responds to the display of heads and hand in much the way he responds to the display of the mutilated Lavinia; he calls for Titus to "die," to "rend" off his hair, to "gnaw" his other hand, and "to storm," that is, to display his grief in all the prescribed manners of histrionic expression (Roach 1993). But Titus, in what Jonathan Bate terms "the play's pivotal indecorum," *laughs* and then turns the occasion of his grief into an opportunity to re-order and reconstitute the dismembered family (Bate 2000: 204 n. 265). He first stares into the faces of "these two heads [which] do seem to speak to me" and charge him with the imperative to revenge. Then he has his remaining family members "circle [him] about," as he places "his palm on either the head or heart of each one of them" (Taymor 2000: 109). Finally, he allots to each duties that range from Lavinia taking his hand in her mouth to Lucius raising an army of the Goths against Saturninus.

The ritualized nature of this scene echoes with crucial differences the earlier scene at the family mausoleum, as we watch the remaining Andronici gather together dismembered parts of their familial body as a first stage towards reinventing their relationship both to themselves and to the Roman state. Though much that they do or say from this point forward will remain ineffectual, and virtually all that Titus does will generate the pity and skepticism of the more rational Marcus, a corner has been turned in Taymor's representation of their plight that will fill them with some of the same anarchic energy and force heretofore invested primarily in Aaron and, to a lesser extent, in Tamora and her sons.

Ovidian Cinema

The fourth of Taymor's PANs, in which Lavinia writes the names of her attackers in the sand with a stick, is perhaps the film's most powerful and ambiguous interpolation. It is also the one that most explicitly addresses the complicity of art with violence – an insight delivered by the intertext that has exerted enormous influence on Taymor's work throughout her career, that is, Ovid's tales of serial violence in the service of power, *The Metamorphoses*. This long, narrative poem relates more than two hundred classical myths, stories of various humans bodily transformed by the gods. The theme of these stories is the inevitability of entropy or change, for both individuals and civilizations (Troy, Rome), but Ovid leaves it to the reader to interpret the consequences, opportunities, and costs of transformation. As in the playtext, this influential classical text appears in the film as a source, a prop, a key to the action (Titus and Marcus draw on several Ovidian stories to decode Lavinia's signs), and an occasion for improvisation. *The Metamorphoses* was to Renaissance writers what Shakespeare's play is to Taymor, a "universe of knowledge" collected in one place (James 2003: 346). Sensational, violent, and sometimes erotic, the poem was also understood by commentators, translators, and imitators as a profoundly political work – though there was hardly a consensus about the morals this fluid, ambiguous narrative might be seen to endorse (James 2003). Like Taymor's film, Ovid's poem was notorious for being sensually and aesthetically powerful but morally undefinable, so complexly allusive as to be irreducible to a single, coherent moral or message.

Allusions to a number of Ovid's tales abound in *Titus Andronicus*, sometimes as passing references but more often in the ways characters explain and justify their experiences. Tereus's brutal rape and silencing of Philomel, and the terrible culinary revenge exacted by his wife, Philomel's sister, Procne, is source and referent for one of the primary plots of this play. The Andronici men regularly draw this connection to explain what has happened to Lavinia ("sure, some Tereus hath deflower'd thee," 2.4.26). Yet the Ovidian story that may matter more to Taymor is the story of Daphne. A quick summary is helpful for understanding its full resonance for the film and the way it organizes this PAN in particular. Pursued by a rapacious Apollo (the patron god of art and letters), the reluctant Daphne flees to her father, the river god Peneus, who to protect her transformation her into a laurel tree. Catching her just before the transformation is complete – her hair and hands turned to branches, while her heart still "panted in th' unfinish'd part" – Apollo vows he will have her, if not as his love then as his emblem, a trophy of sorts.¹⁷ Breaking off a branch, he makes himself a laurel crown and announces it will henceforth become the symbol of triumph, in war and in the arts. For conservative Renaissance commentators, as Heather James explains, Daphne's transformation was regularly interpreted as a reward; she "reposes in her laurel form, welcoming the honor granted to



4.5 Lavinia
as Daphne

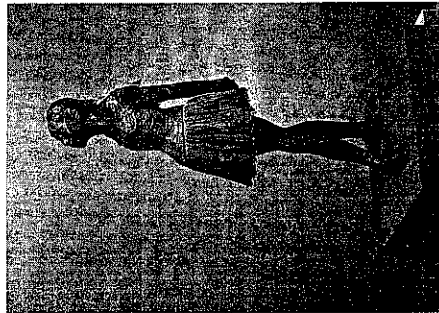
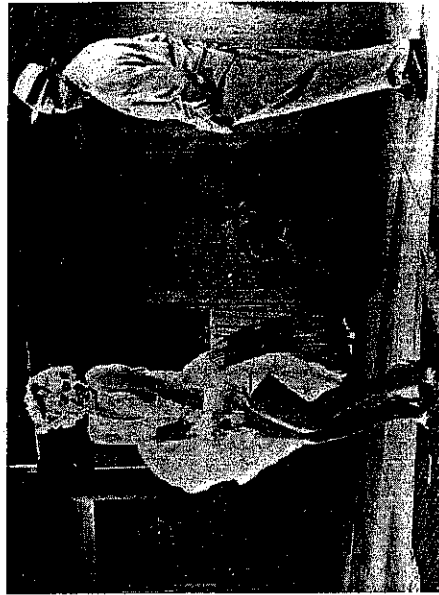
her for revering virginity" (2003: 348). For writers such as Shakespeare, however, the ambivalent, uncomfortably erotic and resistant aspects of her story become an occasion for subversive accounts of the silencing of creative voice, particularly female voice. Daphne's physical distress even at the moment of transformation serves as a reminder of the objectifying violence of art as it makes persons into symbols, whether in the service of pleasure or political power (Enterline 1997). For a highly stylized artist of symbols, such as Taymor, Daphne's story encodes the ever-present dangers of complicity with this objectification.

Taymor introduces the Daphne motif obliquely, with the sound of Alarbus's panting torso in the first PAN. The torso is a metamorphic figure: half-transformed by mutilation into a sign and precedent for Tamora's revenge, resembling the iconic torsos of classical sculpture. The agitated gasps on the soundtrack insist on its humanity and testify to individual pain – underscoring its confused status as both object and subject and emphasizing the cost of this metamorphosis. The Daphne motif becomes shockingly explicit when we first see Lavinia after her rape. Shot mostly from below, she is posed on a stump (a visual pun for the laurel and for dismemberment), at the marshy edge of a river. The black twigs are artfully bound to her bloody wrists and her straggles of black hair echo the pleading shapes of dead branches around her (figure 4.5).

The wooden hands that young Lucius later provides develop this motif. Donaldson notes that Lucius picks them up in a "rhyming shot" that suggests the compensatory power of art to "answer" his earlier violent handling of the action figures (2006). Yet that shot also rhymes with Lavinia's own, helpless gestures as she rotates first her twiggied stumps (in the post-rape scene) and later the hands themselves (called, in the DVD title, "Prosthetic Branches"). Because these prostheses seem to have been carved as the hands of saints, and because they serve to express *Titus's* meanings as much or more than her own, they remain ambiguous interpolations: part compensatory tools, part reminder of Lavinia's conversion into a figure or sign, a symbol of martyred innocence and "pattern, president, and lively warrant" of the moral authority of the Andronici (5.3.44).

Joe-girl and
-boys

Taymor's fourth PAN elaborates these ideas and connects the Daphne motif indexically with a number of other, ambiguous, visual allusions. In "Lavinia's Sorrows Printed Plain" we watch as (in Taymor's words) "a bolt of electric shock seems to run through [Lavinia's] body" which prompts the intercutting of her "ferocious writing in the sand" with "a bombardment of surreal images of her rape and dismemberment" (Taymor 2000: 117). These images reproduce the scene of her ravishment in broadly symbolic terms; Lavinia is figured as an innocent "doe-girl" (visually fulfilling the metaphors of hunting and pursuit that mark her plot-line in the playtext) trying to ward off the rabid attack of "tiger-boys" Chiron (Jonathan Rhys Meyers) and Demetrius (Matthew Rhys) (figure 4.6).

4.7 Little Dancer
and Marilyn
Monroe

The three figures are arranged in the familiar triptych structure that characterizes most of the PANs: with aggressors posed opposite each other on the sides and the pleading figure of their victim posed vulnerably on a pedestal in the center. Screen overlays of dead branches in the background reprise the tree puns from the post-rape scene and anchor this PAN in the moment of Lavinia's writing, where intercut shots from below frame her head against a tree-filled sky. The triptych layout of the PAN makes more sense in this Ovidian context. We can see it as a two-dimensional version of the first-person, surround space grammar Taymor adapts from virtual story spaces.¹⁸ The figure at the center thus serves as the crossroads of different allusive readings, alternate paths of interaction viewers follow as they make meaning from a discursively unstable collage of images. We might also see the triptych structure as a triumphal one, composed of arcs (the leaping tigers) and columns (the statue-like centerpieces; the huge, mask-like flanking faces).

These overlays and the digital collage that gives Lavinia hooves provide a powerful cinematic correlative for the terrible metamorphoses that beset Ovid's famous characters. We see Lavinia through the branches of her transformation both as a symbolic figure and as a character undergoing a powerful internal experience. For Shakespeare's characters, Ovid's stories organize ways of thinking, planning, and experiencing the world. So it is plausible here to see this iconography as belonging at least in part to the inner life of Lavinia-the-character, as the DVD chapter title "Lavinia's Sorrows" implies: these are the received materials of culture that she thinks with and recycles as she writes her experience. As Taymor remarks, "I devised the concept of the 'Penny Arcade Nightmares' to portray the inner landscapes of the mind as affected by the external actions. . . . They depict, in abstract collages, fragments of memory, the unfathomable layers of a violent event, the metamorphic flux of the human, animal, and the divine" (2000: 183).

Yet, as with the Alarbus PAN, the iconography of this nightmare is clearly also external to character, meant not to unfold her inner life but to call attention to the way in which Western culture destructively recycles the Daphne/Lavinia story. Thus the PAN surrogates Daphne – seeks satisfactory modern stand-ins for her – with a culturally promiscuous set of modern allusions. The figure of Lavinia sculpturally displayed on a columned pedestal alludes to Degas's "Little Dancer, Aged Fourteen" (1880-1). That statue's "physiognomy, oddly tilted up and thrust forward" in a manner that could well "express a sense of strain or suffering, reflecting her effort to maintain an awkward posture," was disapprovingly construed by Degas's public as a form of preening, which "mingled with it a vaguely sensual yearning, especially in the half-closed eyes" (Czestochowski and Pinget 2002: 51-2).¹⁹ Lavinia's pose also quotes, in a decidedly more anxious and ambiguous fashion, the erotic abandon of Marilyn Monroe allowing a draft of air to puff up her summery dress in *The Seven-Year Itch* (1955) (Lehmann 2002a: 274-75; Burt 2002a: 315).

These allusions prompt troubling questions regarding what exactly Taymor wants us to draw from such iconically crossed references. Are we supposed to be turned on or turned off by the fact that what alluringly lifts Lavinia's skirts is radically unlike the desired draft of air in which Monroe's skirt bellows? And which Monroe, of the many idealized figures of twentieth-century American femininity, is being evoked? After all, Monroe is another compound cultural icon, like Lavinia, whose story recombines not only Daphne, nor only Philomel, Lucrece, and other Ovidian objects of desire, but all these figures at once and none of them exactly.²⁰ Surrogates always fall short of or exceed the figures they replace, generating such troubling mismatches. But in doing so they also keep alive the network of cultural meanings and relations that attach to their avatars. The perverse eroticism evoked by the Monroe and Degas dancer allusions evoke the essential cultural dynamics of Daphne's story: the destructive, symbolic conversion of the female body in the service of erotic pleasure, artistic triumph, commercial success, masculine control, or political authority. As with the Daphne story, the silent agitation of the female figure placed at the center of this story, transformed into a work of art (as her position on the fluted pedestal implies), insists on the cost of silenced voices (especially female voices). It is important to remember here that we do not learn about "Lavinia's sorrows" from these images. "Printed plain" on the sandy ground are only two names, Chiron and Demetrius; Lavinia's experience remains inaccessible, a blank space onto which the Andronici, Taymor, and we inscribe our own meanings, in variously tragic, triumphal, and subversive ways.

That this inscription of meaning is an objectifying and ultimately violent process is Ovid's theme and also Taymor's. It clarifies the brilliant necessity of Degas's ballerina and Monroe as surrogates. The substitution of pedestal for stump is the final transformation in a series that begins with a living figure and ends in a monument. For Taymor's

purposes it does not matter if anyone remembers that the discomfort generated by this confluence of ideas was once invested in Ovid's Daphne. It is sufficient if we feel the discomfort enough to begin to reflect critically on our own processes of reception and recognize the violence of objectification not as an ancient barbarism but as a function of the workings of our own culture.

Violent Reversals

The action that generates or is co-generative with this nightmare – that is, Lavinia's resolute embrace of the stick that enables her writing in the sand – is considerably less ambiguous than the Ovidian visuals, at least at first. The "ferocious" nature of Lavinia's writing serves as an incommensurate but effectual answer to the ferocious attack on her by Chiron and Demetrius, and underwrites the energy and resolve with which Marcus and Titus engage in yet another ritual vow of revenge, this one aimed against "these traitorous Goths." Lavinia's extraordinary reliving of her ravishment and mutilation appears to operate on her with the force of primal therapy, as she transforms the trauma of memory into a cathartic expression of renewed agency. Indeed, the long, angular marks in the sand seem to answer rather than echo the branches in the sky behind her, reconfiguring Daphne's transformation, suggesting that for this moment Lavinia is author and agent as much as object of the story. This scene does not so much replay as recycle Ovid's story of Tereus's rape of Philomela with some crucial variations. As in Shakespeare's play, Marcus models a way of writing using his mouth that supersedes Philomel's visual illustration of the scene of her rape and mutilation in the weaving she fabricates and sends to her sister, Procne. But Taymor's Lavinia innovates further (in a gesture not provided by Shakespeare) when she refuses to take the stick's vividly phallic handle in her mouth, and braces it with her shoulder instead. This triumph of traumatically charged writing over illustration is, in turn, visually "overwritten" by the stunning Ovidian collages Taymor seems to draw out of Lavinia's unconscious, but actually embroiders through the medium of advanced computer technology.

These adaptations of Ovidian intertext prompt the first effort on the part of Titus – successor to and substitute for Ovid's ferocious Procne – to meet terror with terror as he sends young Lucius over to the apartment of Chiron and Demetrius to deliver a bundle of "archaic weapons from the dark ages" laced with an apt quotation from Horace (Taymor 2000: 121). We use the word "terror" to describe this action because however ineffectual the gesture may seem, it marks the first time that Titus becomes master of the kind of activated dramatic irony that has heretofore been exclusively Aaron's medium of manipulation and control. The term also suits the panicked response Titus's second exercise – showering the imperial palace with letters of complaint to the gods – elicits from Saturninus. Taymor choreographs this scene (4.3)

with a carnivalesque panache that makes Titus seem more divinely inspired artist than madman as he assembles his followers, moving from house to house, with young Lucius pulling a red Radio Flyer wagon filled with tools and weapons. Although in Shakespeare Titus's extended family participates in his exploits solely to "feed" the "humour" of a "noble uncle thus distract" (4.3.26), Taymor presents the action in a manner that belies the family's misgivings and the paths that normally attends this scene in production. She emphasizes the pleasure and solidarity the Andronici experience in the act itself, and she provides us with direct access to the immediate effect the shower of arrows has on Saturninus and his decadent court. Thus instead of enduring the comparatively static Clown and pigeons scene that follows the discharge of arrows in the playtext, we watch as the camera follows the arrows' flight into a Pelliniesque scene of orgy and banquetting where they descend like a siege of avenging angels.

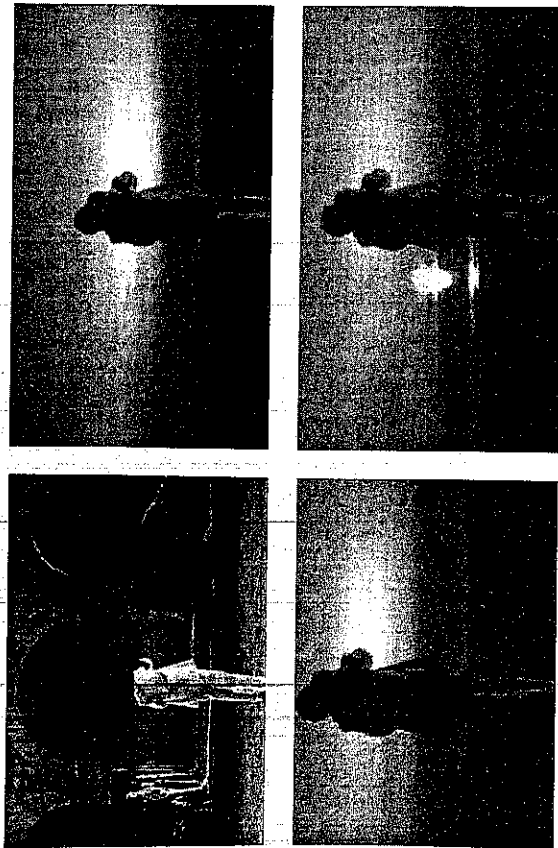
We soon catch up with the elided playtext in a sequence that again surrogates something new to something textually established, as news of the shower of arrows awakens Saturninus, who has been contentedly sleeping, naked as a baby, on the breast of his wife-mother. At this point, Taymor plays dramatically fast and loose both with the text and with our expectations of "reality" as the night-time arrows that find Saturninus asleep, push him from his bed, into a dressing gown, out to a courtyard brimming with daylight, and then fully dressed into the Senate chamber in a montage of six cleverly edited tracking shots. The abruptness with which Saturninus moves from child-like calm to hysterical abandon is made to appear the direct result of an action that could not seem more ineffectual, but which transforms Titus into the aggressor and Saturninus into prey.

The effectual terror Titus and his cohorts unleash – and go on to burnish considerably as the film unfolds – suggestively resonates with two scenes that flank it which concentrate on Aaron. In the first of these, Aaron removes himself from the contention between the Andronici and Saturninus by dedicating himself to the survival of his newborn child, an act cued by his shocking murder of the nurse who functioned as intermediary between Aaron and Tamora. This act is performed with a suddenness and resolve that recalls, but departs from, Titus's earlier murder of his son Mutius by making Aaron seem a far more purposeful than reactive figure. Taymor elaborates on this contrast by having Aaron, after being taken captive by Lucius, exercise an impressive degree of control over what his captors can do with him. In both scenes we watch Aaron casually exceed the limit of behaviors that seem reasonable, turning his associates and enemies into the same kind of awestruck witnesses that we all eventually become as we witness Titus's own gathering assurance and empowerment.

Although Taymor presents the dialogue of this scene in full fidelity to the text of 5.1, her direction and filming of it forcefully elaborate on the disproportion of line-assignments in the scene: Aaron gets 20 lines

for every one line uttered by Lucius. Jonathan Bate's edition of the play has stage-directions that read *A Goth brings a ladder, which Aaron is made to climb* and, later, *to climb down*, but offers no prompts for actions undertaken during Aaron's interrogation. By contrast in *Titus*, Harry Lennix's Aaron pridefully sustains a vicious blow from Lucius for every self-congratulatory claim he makes: "I trained/I wrote/I played." Then he climbs the ladder himself and places the noose around his own neck, before unexpectedly removing it in order to leap down upon the unsuspecting Lucius. In each instance, Taymor cues the crafty aggressor in Aaron to rise against his newly established status as victim and captive; this makes the characteristically aggressive Lucius seem increasingly ineffectual, to the point of implicitly acknowledging Aaron's unconquerable spirit. When we join to this Aaron's earlier (and successful) effort to have Lucius swear, "To save my boy, to nourish and bring him up" (5.1.84), we may well register a more deeply (and darkly) ironic mingling of the roles of villain and victim than the playtext alone would encourage. That mingled role anticipates (and possibly conditions) Titus's own erratic evolution from rigorous militarist to Job-like victim to cold-blooded butcher to "homicidal merry prankster" (McCandless 2002: 492). As the film's momentum shifts in Titus's favor, and he develops an Aaron-like command over his enemies and cinematic resources alike, the certainty that we are about to surfeit on another course of ultra-violence qualifies the pleasure we may also feel as Titus ambles around the banquet table in white chef's attire, to serve up his pasty of crushed bones and blood to Tamora and Saturninus.

Our status as "ethical spectators" is challenged more pointedly in this closing movement than it is at any other moment of the film. Lacking the improvisatory genius supplied by Aaron, Tamora and her sons virtually fall into Titus's lap as he parodically models Jacques-Louis David's iconic painting of "The Death of Marat" (1793) while making childish sketches of his enemies in his bath. The coolness and efficiency with which Titus takes advantage of this opportunity would no doubt garner Aaron's professional approval. It clearly strikes Taymor's artistic fancy as well as she cuts from the phantasmagoric mode of her fifth PAN (which includes allusions to everything from the Statue of Liberty to Blind Justice to *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (1975)) to an even campier style that evokes David Lynch and the everyday terrors of American suburban life in films such as *Blue Velvet* (1986). As Titus's human meat-pies cool in the breeze, who really chafes at the certainty that a fully earned act of retribution is about to ensue? Our fairly assured complicity in approving Titus's designs is, however, given a rude check by the quietly maniacal manner with which Taymor has Titus break the passive Lavinia's neck, as if she were more wounded sparrow than human being. And the further elisions and interpolations Taymor makes in her filming of the last section of 5.3 make it even harder to sustain an unalloyed regard for Titus, who arguably becomes at this moment more "psycho-killer" than



us walks
story

prankster, perhaps even retrospectively clarifying for us the "cruel irreligious piety" of his devotion to a death-cult devoted to honor.²¹

Taymor dissociates our sympathies from Titus in these closing scenes in several ways. She cuts close to 30 lines of moving farewells to the dead Titus spoken in the playtext by Marcus, Lucius, and, most crucially, by young Lucius — who, in Shakespeare's text, wishes that he, himself, were dead "so you [that is, Titus] did live again" (5.3.173). She maintains the elder Lucius's closing condemnation of the "beastly" and pitiless Tamora, who by this point seems no more beastly or pitiless than Titus himself. And she gives young Lucius the crucial final directive to take up Aaron's child and carry him away through the once-closed gates of history into what appears to be a new dawn. In this way, Taymor affiliates the offspring of the ravenous Moor and Goth with a character who, in this surrogation of *Titus Andronicus*, has supplanted his grandfather as *our* stand-in, witness, and point of reference.

In his new gentleness, Lucius has discernibly learned things that his father and grandfather could not teach him. Whereas the young Lucius of the playtext promises to do everything in his power to emulate the fallen Titus, the young Lucius of the film's ending promises to differentiate himself from the patriarchal mold of his grandfather and father alike. As noted above, Aaron and Titus have, by this point, become oddly paired sharers in the manic theatrical energy that, in this film, signals agency and command. By contrast, Aaron's child and Titus's grandson are paired at the end in a very different form of agency. That new form of agency involves a determined effort to move outside the frame of the filmic *mise en scène* (composed of long-established artifacts, allusions, patterns of violence) and thus

out of what that film has represented as "the last 2000 years of man's inhumanity to man."

Taymor draws our eye to Lucius's movement outside the frame of the film's *mise en scène* in a very deliberate way. Having exhausted all that the playtext can say for itself, she interpolates an ending that takes us on a slow-motion tour of several successive forms of artistic and dramatic framing. In the first still, the camera frames Lucius leaving the coliseum in a "realistic" long shot, as he heads towards one of the arches of the surrounding arcade. His departure, after the last spoken line of the play, is heralded by the counterpoint cries of a baby and the shrieks of birds. These sounds dissolve into the sound of bells, blending into Elliot Goldenthal's elegiac score. In the second still, the realistic structure of the arcade seems to have dropped away or been removed, replaced by a backlit proscenium-arch stage. Although Lucius still seems to be walking on solid ground towards a theatrical sky that recedes beyond him, the rectangular frame contained within the larger film frame also suggests that he may be walking towards, or into, the screen of a movie theater. In the third and fourth stills, Lucius has journeyed so far that this internal theatrical frame has dissolved, as has the illusion of an essentially theatrical backdrop: the horizon seems to stretch beyond the frame on both sides in a full realization of the endlessness and "continual newness" of Cinemascope space (Cohen 1998: 273). While he seems a tangible, if increasingly "cinematized," presence in the third still, in the fourth the reddish hue of the sunrise seems to seep through him as if the light and landscape are more real than he is. And whereas Lucius's tall figure fills the center of the frame in the third still (a medium shot that literally enlarges him), by the time we arrive at the fourth he seems to have taken several strides beyond our reach, becoming ever more remote, at the point of vanishing into cinematic space. In the last frame, however, the impression of Lucius's dissolution is arrested by the freezing of the entire image, in the manner of a carefully posed photograph.

This artful freeze of the dissolving image of Lucius carrying a second child into a cine-mediated dawn serves as a strong aesthetic and dramatic counter to the violent and frenetically paced way in which we were first introduced to Lucius in the film's induction. Young Lucius remains a figure of transport between fictional worlds, but here he is the agent rather than the object of that movement. This freeze also radically alters the terms of our engagement with a film that throughout seemed wedded to an aesthetic and ethics of uncertain signification. Although the politics of this gesture may no doubt be construed as "soft" and hardly an effectual answer to the horrors that the film puts on display, it operates as the most sustained and sustaining of Taymor's postmodern interpolations, offering an undeniable ethical (and aesthetic) counterpoint to the continuous predation the elder Lucius proclaims at play's end.

The Door in the Sky

Several influential interpreters of Taymor's film take a more skeptical approach to this interpolated ending than the one we offer here. We quote them at length because the issues they raise are compelling and because it is the nature of allusive reading to travel along different associative axes. Indeed, the richer the context in which a film may be approached, the more diverse, even contradictory, the readings evoked. Taymor's tampering with the ending of Shakespeare's play has evoked hostile reaction among even avowedly postmodern critical practitioners. Richard Burt concedes that the "early violence, including the opening scene of the boy playing with his war toys, throws Lucius's later pacifism into bold relief"; but he also observes that in a "schlocky" moment "worthy of a 'Kids Raising Kids' episode of Rikki Lake," young Lucius "walks with the baby out of the arena into a sunrise much as the boy Eliot carried the alien E.T. when they rode together on a bike off into the sky in Spielberg's *E.T.*" (Burt 2002a: 311). David McCandless takes a similarly double-edged stance towards the film's ending. McCandless first observes, "This climactic rejection of violence constitutes the film's final decisive instance of trauma management. In exiting the Colosseum, Young Lucius breaks the cycle of violence that the stage-production portrayed as unbreakable. To the extent that the boy's violent play called the world of violence into being, his absence from it signifies its collapse" (2002: 509). However, McCandless also claims that Young Lucius's walk into a "computer generated sunrise" is a "wish-fulfillment fantasy [that is] uncomfortably comparable to a 'Hollywood Happy Ending'" (2002: 510). What might be seen as a genuine release from trauma for the character appears more ambivalently as an invented, "quasi-therapeutic," even false vision of safety for the audience (2002: 510).²²

We take seriously such reservations about both the ending and Taymor's explanation of its operation as a "counterpoint to Shakespeare's dark tale of vengeance" (Taymor 2000: 185). Yet we also see Taymor's decision as contextually linked to certain artistic tendencies of the last 15 years or so that complicate any simple opposition of fantasy-wish-fulfillment with realism (particularly in cinema, where the two are impossible to separate, as Burt and McCandless remind us). We offer in conclusion examples from two artists who seek similar alternatives to what we have, *pace* Taymor, identified as "history," or, in her words, as "the last 2000 years of man's inhumanity to man."

One of the most defensible examples of this tendency to seek narrative "ways out" is the alternate, or double, ending that Derek Jarman appends to his 1991 film-version of *Edward II*. In the film's fantasy of escape (and resistance both to Marlowe's play and history alike), Edward's designated executioner, Lightborne, casts his hot poker away and embraces Edward as a lover. Jarman supplies footage of the play's ending as well (having Lightborne drive a hot poker up Edward's anus),



4-9 Von Trier's triptych: Expressionist bells

but intercuts the two in a way that privileges neither – thereby providing his audience with a double perspective. One perspective articulates the past; the other articulates the "best-case" present or, at worst, anticipated future. To a critical reader, Jarman's apparent "decision to delegate Edward's actual execution to the province of nightmare . . . magically elides the very relation between past and present oppressions that he otherwise seeks to document" (Cartelli 1998: 220). Yet Jarman's provision of what is, after all, only a possible ending (and not the most plausible one) also suggests he is "unwilling to allow a too powerful imaging of the material oppression of homosexuals to carry over into the present without simultaneously providing a way out" (Cartelli 1998: 220). In this enterprise, Jarman could have found a powerful ally in Tony Kushner, whose "gay fantasia on national themes," *Angels in America: Part One; Millennium Approaches*, would generate a second part, *Perestroika*, in which its presumably doomed protagonist, Prior Walter, is allowed to outlive the same AIDS virus that took Jarman's life.

However, even if we grant such politically charged antecedents the authority to flaunt realism in this way, what authorizes Taymor's attempt to release Shakespeare's "dark tale of vengeance" from the grip of darkness? How do we differentiate her "Hollywood Happy Ending" from the happy ending Nahum Tate appended to *King Lear* 200-odd years ago? We do so not by reproducing Tate's argument that he was simply naturalizing (that is, restoring a natural perspective to) the unnaturally horrid prospects Shakespeare was compelling his audiences (and readers) to swallow. Instead, we do the opposite, and accept the artificiality of Taymor's "computer-generated sunrise" as an admittedly strained solution to – but needed departure from – the seemingly insoluble problem of mutually predation. That said, there are surely cognate humanist impulses in Tate's and Taymor's decision to turn brutal stories to new purposes. As Jarman might say, why take on such a "musty play" in the first place if you don't intend to "violate it"?

Victoria Nelson offers a somewhat different take on the problem in her brilliant account of the Lars von Trier film, *Breaking the Waves* (1996), which ends with the ringing of enormous heavenly bells (visible

to the film viewer from on high no less) that confirm the "holiness" of the "sacrifice" performed by the film's sexual martyr, Bess. To abbreviate her argument, Nelson seeks to rescue the ending of von Trier's film from detractors who find in it "an unholy alliance of 1940s movie kitsch with organized religion" (Nelson 2001: 229). She does so by claiming that, absent "the metaphysical level on which the bells operate . . . *Breaking the Waves* would be just another example of the sort of art Westerners have happily consumed for a hundred and fifty years: social realism shading into modernism that steadfastly upholds a rational-empirical worldview" (Nelson 2001: 229). And she concludes:

To the adherents of this sensibility, the demand for "realism" is as narrow and two dimensional as the bells are to detractors of *Breaking the Waves*. In New Expressionist terms, the bells represent a Shakespearean ending in which the moral order has been restored by a message from those inner areas of reality coincident with a transcendental reality we do not experience with our five senses – and it is a defiant message in the face of all sensible judgment as rendered by the well-intentioned, both within the film and in the audience. (Nelson 2001: 230)

Taymor would no doubt discern some slippage between Nelson's effort to recuperate the space of the spiritual or uncanny for Western art and her own effort to generate – "as if redemption were a possibility" (2000: 185) – an ethical alternative to the very different kind of "Shakespearean ending" with which she was contending in *Titus*. For Taymor, the *idea of a possibility* – of release, escape, redemption – is about as far as it gets. However, the solution she arrives at through the medium of young Lucius uncannily echoes von Trier's conclusion, as the soundtrack dissolves from the cries of infants, to the shriek of birds of prey, to peals of bells. When Taymor briefly quotes Edward Munch's "The Scream" (1897) in the opening scene of *Titus*, the gesture connects her project with the earliest aims of Expressionism: to represent feelings, emotions, reactions to the world, rather than the world itself. Young Lucius's departure into a cinematic sunrise invites us to think along the vector of this aesthetic. Whereas the terrified figure in Munch's painting turns its back to a burning sky, this figure turns to face it: daring it, risking it. This reframing gesture suggests that while the world does not change – indeed, remains full of dehumanizing violence – one's stance in relation to it can change. The figure of exit is important, then, not because such exits exist as such or are being offered (that would be compensatory reassurance) but because they can be imagined. In Nelson's words, such reframing gestures mark "the moment when we become completely conscious of the boundaries of the worldview we have comfortably inhabited for several centuries that is also, inevitably, the moment we abandon it: we see the door in the sky, and we walk through it" (Nelson 2001: 23).

5 Vernacular Shakespeare

The adaptations explored in this chapter operate in a different vein of cultural reference and technical sophistication than the comparatively "high-style" remediations of *Hamlet* and *Titus Andronicus* on which we have focused thus far. Julie Taymor's subject is nothing less than "the last 2000 years of man's inhumanity to man," and the art-forms and iconography through which that inhumanity has been represented. Michael Almereyda's is a play to which Western culture has regularly returned over the course of 400 years to stage the conflict between the always unsatisfied desire for presence and certainty and the technologies that mediate that desire. By contrast, the "subject" of a film like Al Pacino's *Looking for Richard* could be said to be adaptation itself, particularly the adaptation of Shakespeare to "the movies," as that term is commonly understood in the vernacular surround of American popular culture.

Several obstacles have long stood in the way of Shakespeare meeting America "on equal terms" at the movies. In her article "Welcoming Shakespeare into the Caliban Family" (1996) culture critic Margo Jefferson identifies the first of these as a problem of language:

Shakespeare must meet America at the movies, and on equal terms. Combative, experimental and mutually seductive, whether in a mass-culture smash or a quirky art house "docudrama" like Al Pacino's current "Looking for Richard." . . . Shakespeare must adjust to city street and suburban mall English, constantly reinlected by different regions, neighborhoods, races, ethnicities and classes. (1996: C11, 16)

No matter how vividly present the architecture of a cinematic Venice or Verona may seem, characters speaking Shakespearean verse (particularly in the classic British acting tradition) may sound stuffy and mannered, if not downright foreign to modern American audiences. Moreover, the passage implies, a film fully invested in that language reflects a world of unequals: on the one hand an educated elite who inherit the difficult language as their own; on the other, those urban and suburban speakers from "different regions, neighborhoods, races, ethnicities" who do not. In this chapter we explore several recent films that set out in different ways to redesign Shakespearean language to echo the pacing and rhythms, the sounds and stylings, of the American street. At the same time, we explore the different vocabulary

• parody, burlesque, and masquerade
• docudrama
• popular culture
• sound
• riffing
• sampling

- 13 On Shakespeare as a field of transaction between the "high" and the "popular," see Lanier (2002b).
- 14 See Burt (2003) and Osborne (2002) for discussions of DVD mediations of Shakespeare film. Achand (2003) offers the most extensive account of the changing paratextual landscape in the global film industry.
- 15 Peter Donaldson develops the phrase "media allegory" over a number of essays (1990-2005) and uses it to describe Shakespeare films that use shifts of cinematic style to reflect on transitions between different media and the history of technological change. See also Douglas Bruster on these effects in Mazursky's *Termpast* (2000).

Chapter 3 *Hamlet* Rewound

- 1 The association between film and modernity in critical theory takes different forms and has passed through a number of phases, from early Russian and French film theory to the philosophies of a Cavell or a Deleuze.
- 2 See, for example, Marcel Gromaire's totalizing "A Painter's Ideas about the Cinema" (1919) (1988) or Andre Bazin's exceptionalist "The Myth of Total Cinema" (1946) (1967).
- 3 Robert Stam (2005b, chapter 6) discusses Godard's adaptations (including his *King Lear* (1987)) in the context of the larger "querelle de l'adaptation" that helped define the French New Wave as a cinematic movement.
- 4 For discussions of the classroom scene *topos* in American films since the 1990s see Semenza (2005), Deitchman (2002), and Burt (2002c).
- 5 "Presentism" is the tendency to interpret earlier works and events according to our own cultural standards, as if early modern culture were, in Margreta de Grazia's words, the "early now." In Shakespeare studies, de Grazia (1995a, 1995b, 1996) and Terence Hawkes (2002) have offered the most sustained analysis of this approach.
- 6 For Walter Benjamin, the newspaper and novel destroy the "chasteness" and embedded life of storytelling; for Fredric Jameson, photography challenges the fullness of novelistic representation (Frow 1997: 224). More recently television has played the role of the impoverished new comer.
- 7 Unless otherwise indicated, all citations to Shakespeare's work reference *The Riverside Shakespeare*, ed. G. Blakemore Evans (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974).
- 8 See Yates (1966), Carruthers (1990), Maguire (1996), Tribble (2005), and Sullivan (1999).
- 9 The still fresh insight that all new technologies lag behind our needs of them is Richard Lanham's (1993).
- 10 For a discussion of the history, art, and science of Pixelvision, see <http://www.michaeloreilly.com/pixelpage.html>. For a selection of Benning's work, see <http://www.vdb.org/smackn.acg?pk&gdetail/SADIEBENNI>. Almercyda has also experimented with this medium in earlier shorts and other films.
- 11 But see Hodgdon for an opposing view evocative of Nora's position: "overall the film marks not just the waning of affect but of rich verbal communication in present-day culture, substituting for the memory of that heritage the ephemera of media culture" (2003b: 202).
- 12 Hodgdon observes that the ghost's sudden physical presence is "made all the more startling because Hamlet and the spectator see the ghost simultaneously, one of the few times the film invites such specular identification" (2003b: 201).
- 13 Lanier explains: "Many of Hamlet's filmmaking efforts are directed toward using film to create a counter discourse, in effect turning the technological apparatus of media culture back on itself in an effort to expose its complicity with corporate corruption. This is, for example, how Hamlet confronts Claudius's opening news conference, training his independent lens on the 'official' media and creating his own unfiltered record of the event" (2002b: 174).
- 14 Lanier contends that this scene offers no "space of resistance" (2002b: 176).

- 15 On film pornography and fictions of presence, see Williams (1989).
- 16 The "snow" screens in Hamlet's videos recall the strips of blank film that punctuate Connor's shorts. Video "snow" is the textual record of a recorder turned off, reminding us (Connor's signature gesture) that what we are looking at is a material and mechanical record. Moreover, Hamlet's credit line, "This is a film by HAMLET," echoes a similar gesture in Connor's short, "A Movie," which prominently displays the tag "BY BRUCE CONNER" throughout. (Thanks to one of our students, Andrew Hall, for noting the allusive play on authorship: 2006). The credit line, an intertextual signature, is thus both an allusion and a pun. It simultaneously asserts the claim and the limits of authorship.
- 17 Although it helps: See Cynthia Fuchs, "Interview with Michael Almercyda," <http://www.popmatters.com/film/interviews/almercyda-michael.html>.

Chapter 4 *Colliding Time and Space in Taymor's Titus*

- 1 Taymor notes that her production designer, Dante Ferretti introduced her "to E.U.R., Mussolini's government centre, whose principal building is referred to as the 'square coliseum' because of its myriad arches. Built by Mussolini to re-create the glory of the ancient Roman Empire, this surreal - almost futuristic - architecture was a setting that perfectly embodied the concept for the film" (2000: 178).
- 2 The first image to the left in figure 4.1 is drawn from Peter Greenaway's *The Belly of an Architect*, the one below it from *Titus*. The taller image on the right is a photograph made by Philip Greenspun to illustrate a webpage devoted to EUR that is viewable at <http://www.photo.net/italy/rom-eur>.
- 3 Taymor may be mining a late twentieth-century genre, post-apocalyptic film, exemplified by the *Mad Max* films (1979, 1981, 1985). Her adaptation evokes a host of contemporary concerns, ranging from the recent ethnic cleansings in the Balkans to the long-established threat of nuclear annihilation. As the first sentence in Taymor's *Illustrated Screenplay* claims, "We could be in Brooklyn or Sarajevo" (2000: 19).
- 4 In an interview that took place on February 25, 2000 at Columbia University (*Titus* DVD 2), Taymor embraces her reputation as an accomplished stylist of violence. Yet she also describes redesigning the role of young Lucius as a "counterpoint" to the unrelieved violence that makes Aaron and Titus "mirror images of each other" in both play and film.
- 5 Richard Burt, for example, argues that Shakespeare's own cultivation of "aesthetic excess" through "the media of theater and print narrative" effectively "destabilizes precisely the kinds of oppositions Taymor wants to affirm and correlate: between high art (film) and trash (blockbuster); Shakespeare and Shakespeare; a critique of violence and an embrace of violence; modesty versus sexual perversion; and sacred and profane" (2002a: 312-13).
- 6 Many reviews noted Taymor's debt to Fellini - which, it should be added, is as much structural as conceptual. In addition to employing Cinécittà craftsmen, Taymor enlisted a production designer, Ferretti, whose résumé includes five Fellini films between 1980 and 1990. For extended discussions of the Fellini connection see Stone (2000), Burt (2002a) and Donaldson (2006).
- 7 On Cumming's *Cabaret* haircut, linking homosexuality to perversion to Fascism, see Burt (2002a: 315-16) and Anderegg (2004: 186). Anderegg observes, "the danger of the kind of postmodern allusiveness Taymor practices is that the associations evoked will not be those the artist intends. Too many allusions to a diverse mix of external signs can result in a work that has no ultimate center, no 'base' from which the allusions can be launched and controlled" (2004: 186). We share some of Anderegg's reservations about Taymor's free-floating postmodernity. Yet if postmodernism is about anything, it involves the promiscuous relation of signifier to signified. Searching for an example of Taymor's "fidelity" to anything except the Shakespearean playtext (which Anderegg accounts "a virtue"), much

less a fixed "center" or "base" is apt to prove disappointing. Postmodern adaptations test the very notion of a clear boundary between what is "external" (in Ardegg's words) to a work and what "belongs" to it.

8 By "infrastructure" Grigely means the whole range of practices associated with the production, distribution, and formal reception of a given medium. As Donaldson has observed, *Titus* is poised at a moment of significant shift in all these aspects of cinema: advertising, celebrity lives of actors, director's cut editions on DVD, merchandise, toys, novels made from films, websites and the spectrum of fan reworkings are now part of the aesthetically and commercially dispersed experience of movies (2006: 257-8).

9 Taymor and Eileen Blumenthal survey Taymor's work in puppetry, mask making, theater, opera, and film in *Julie Taymor: Playing with Fire* (Blumenthal and Taymor 1995). See, in particular, the chapter on Taymor's 1994 stage production of *Titus Andronicus*.

10 Both the claim of cultural authority by comparison with Rome and the instability of such claims are central concerns of *Titus Andronicus*. Wayward allusions feature prominently in the stories of imperial expansion that Shakespeare adapts from classical epic.

11 If, as Grigely notes, "works are ontologized—that is to say, contextualized semantically—by the temporal history that surrounds their composition" (1995: 103), then Taymor's intervention gains added resonance from events like the wide-spread practice of arbitrary mutilation in the recently concluded civil war in Sierra Leone and from the efforts reportedly undertaken there by American protesters suppliers to fit and sell legs and arms to its victims. This sequence also evokes the grave injuries caused by buried mines in Afghanistan. The topic is tragic-comically treated in a recent Iranian film, *Kandahar* (dir. Mohsen Makhmalbaf, 2001), set in a desert oasis in Afghanistan where people who have lost limbs due to the explosion of buried mines gather to be fitted for prosthetic arms and legs dropped from the sky by UN relief planes.

12 Starks (2002: 134) notes that Taymor may have borrowed the idea of channeling her film through young Lucius's point of view from Jane Howell's 1985 BBC *Titus Andronicus*. As Starks observes, "Taymor first incorporated it in the off-Broadway stage-production she directed in 1994" (2002: 140 n. 56).

13 In the Columbia interview, Taymor approvingly quotes Tamora's description of Titus's commitment to blood sacrifice, as "cruel, irreligious piety" (*Titus*, DVD 2).

14 Marvin Carlson describes "ghosting" as a theatrical effect of audience memory. "The recycled body of an actor, already a complex bearer of semiotic messages, will almost inevitably in a new role evoke the ghost or ghosts of previous roles if they have made any impression whatever on the audience, a phenomenon that often colors and indeed may dominate the reception process" (2001: 8). In cinema, ghosting is related to the familiar phenomenon of typecasting and also to the cult of the celebrity actor, whose personae in different films intersect with public behaviors off-screen.

15 Stone (2000) eloquently unfolds the audio and visual allusions to Fellini's *La Strada* (1954) in this scene.

16 All quotations from the text of *Titus Andronicus* are drawn from Jonathan Bate's Arden edition, 3rd series (London: Thomson Learning, 2000).

17 Shakespeare would likely have been familiar with Arthur Golding's 1567 translation, but for Taymor the text seems to be the translation by Sir Samuel Garth, John Dryden, et al. (1717) in which the key passage reads as follows:

Scarce had she finish'd, when her feet she found
Benumb'd with cold, and fasten'd to the ground:
A filmy hind about her body grows;
Her hair to leaves, her arms extend to boughs:
The nymph is all into a lawrel gone;

The smoothness of her skin remains alone.
Yet Phoebus loves her still, and casting round
Her bole, his arms, some little warmth he found.
The tree still panted in th' unfinished part:
Not wholly vegetive, and heav'd her heart.

18 Thanks to Peter Donaldson for this observation (personal correspondence 2005). It was also the "extraordinarily lifelike appearance" of the little dancer, "enhanced by the use of painted wax and actual clothing" that made her "so disturbing" to Degas's contemporaries. Degas's sculpture, however, was but "a figurine about two-thirds" of his model's actual size and, hence, more akin to "a puppet or doll" (Czeszochowski and Pingot 2002: 52).

19 Allusions regularly seem off-target in this way, an effect that is intrinsic to the act of comparison and that often stumps commentators. When Titus cites the example of Virginius, late in the play, the Riverside commentary puzzles that he has mis-remembered the story: "This Roman centurion killed his daughter to prevent her rape. Either the dramatist has got the story wrong or he is failing to convey the idea that Titus has a better case for killing Lavinia than Virginius had for killing his daughter" (Evans 1997: 1049 fn. 36). We would say rather that Titus has an interest not in getting his source "right" but in adapting it to his situation. In this context, it makes no more sense to hold Taymor to some standard of allusive decorum than it does Shakespeare.

21 Burt contends that "Resistance to fascism becomes in the film a kind of massive death-drive, and honor-killing in the play is transformed into psycho-killing in the film" (2002a: 309). He adds "Antifascism in *Titus* is not collective rational resistance to a tyrannical state, but is located in the subjectivity of a hero who is both sadistic and masochistic and whose acts of violence do not respect distinctions between people who are in or out of his family" (2002a: 310).

22 The notion that Taymor's ending is involved in trauma management is more favorably addressed by Lisa Starks (2002: 121-42).

Chapter 5 Vernacular Shakespeare

1 On Van Sant's appropriations of Shakespeare see Curtis Bright (1997: 295-325), Susan Wiseman (1997: 225-39), and Cartell (1999: 27-9). For a broad discussion of *Idaho* and *Men of Respect*, see Robert E. Willson (1992: 34-7).

2 Foster Hirsch notes that a "central problem of the [Actors] Studio" approach has been "translating emotion into words, learning how to be as turned on by a playwright's words (especially if the playwright isn't a contemporary) as by recalling a powerful image from your life." He adds that "the chasm between feeling and words . . . seems like a continuing hurdle at the Studio" (1984: 198).

3 In an unpublished paper entitled "What country, friends, is this?" Gary Jay Williams remarks an "American ambivalence about Shakespeare" in Pacino's film: "In his film [Pacino] crosses his company's performance of the play dialectically with a performance of anxiety about the authenticity of Shakespeare for everyday Americans, the America from which Mr. Pacino, as a Hollywood film actor, wants and needs to derive his authenticity. Mr. Pacino is not prepared to give up either Shakespeare or America; his film gives us both unreconciled." (1997)

4 The full text of the panhandler's commentary reads: "If we think words are things and we have no feelings in our words, then we say things to each other that don't mean anything. But if we *felt* what we said, we'd say less and mean more." The speech is carefully edited to conclude with a spoken (self-authenticating) request, "Spare change?" directed at a pedestrian outside the frame of the shot and bridging to the next sequence.

5 As Hirsch notes of New York's Actors Studio, "many American actors, told for so long that they don't speak well enough to do justice to the language, have come to believe it" (1984: 200).