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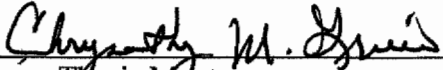
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Asides as Discourse:
The Pendulum of Power between the Sexes in
Shakespeare's *Richard III* and *Titus Andronicus*

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Abstract

The presence of the aside is keenly developed throughout all of William Shakespeare's plays to reveal crucial information regarding his characters; thus, the frequent appearance of this peculiar convention across the genres is worthy of our attention. Clearly differing from its underlying humorous intentions in the comedies and romances, the aside in Shakespeare's histories and tragedies provides a more serious tone. As such, it is important to examine how the convention is depicted in *Richard III* and *Titus Andronicus*, plays that simultaneously follow one another by composition date. Although one critic notes the convention as "potentially disruptive," in the following discussion, I show that the frequent occurrence of such a literary technique suggests quite the opposite. It is not disruptive, but instead establishes a noteworthy trend that explicates and supports the ongoing power struggles between the sexes therefore becoming an imperative addition to an interpretation of the plays. Thus, the aside essentially becomes a constant moving pendulum in which control seldom remains steady. *Richard III* launches this idea as Queen Margaret's initial asides address the presence of a woman's power. On the contrary, the final set of asides from *Titus Andronicus* eventually supports the restoration of male domination. Intricately imbedded in the theme of revenge, the aside in each play provides revealing information regarding the disputing intentions of each play's main characters. Additionally, the convention reveals evil undertones prompting the audience's interest in such characters that can be imbedded in the historical context of the era. Therefore, in using the asides, Shakespeare places the audience as his confidant and primary focus. To understand such conclusions, one must first acknowledge the types of asides and study their influential presence in both plays. After doing so, I examine the final speaker of each aside since he or she reveals intriguing outcomes that ultimately challenge the woman's role in a patriarchal society.

RICHARD GLOUCESTER... Withal, what I have been, and what I am.

QUEEN MARGARET. [aside] A murd'rous villain, and so still thou art.

RICHARD GLOUCESTER. Poor Clarence did forsake his father Warwick – Ay, and
forsook himself, which Jesu pardon –

QUEEN MARGARET. [aside] Which God revenge! (1.3.133-137)

— — —

TAMORA. [aside to her sons] What say you, boys, will you abide
with him

Whiles I go tell my lord the Emperor

How I have governed our determined jest?

Yield to his humor, smooth and speak him fair,

And tarry with him till I turn again.

TITUS. [aside] I knew them all, though they supposed me mad,

And will o'erreach them in their own devices –

A pair of cursed hell-hounds and their dam. (5.2.137-144)

— — —

The presence of the aside is keenly cited in the preceding excerpts from both *Richard III* and *Titus Andronicus* to reveal crucial information regarding Shakespeare's characters. However, these are only minor examples of the frequent appearance of this peculiar convention across the genres. Clearly differing from its underlying humorous intentions in the comedies¹ and romances, the aside in Shakespeare's histories and tragedies provides a more serious tone. As such, it is important to examine how the convention is depicted in *Richard III* and *Titus*

¹ Lopez further notes in "Managing the aside" that "Comedy, more interested in temporary confusion and surprising resolution, tends to use asides more to underscore the advantages and perils of equivocation. There, the whole point is frequently about simply getting the joke" (64).

Andronicus, plays that simultaneously follow one another by composition date. In his insightful article, "Managing the Aside," Jeremy Lopez notes the aside as "one of the most pervasive conventions of English Renaissance drama, and one of the most potentially disruptive" (56). Thus, it is useful to question why Shakespeare felt the need to conveniently place these "most pervasive conventions" that were "most potentially disruptive" throughout certain points of his plays (56). In the following discussion, I plan to show that the frequent occurrence of such a literary technique suggests the opposite of Lopez's latter notion of the aside as a possible disturbance to the play. It is not "disruptive," but instead establishes a noteworthy trend that explicates and supports the ongoing power struggles between the sexes therefore becoming an imperative addition to an interpretation of his plays. Thus, the aside essentially becomes a constant moving pendulum in which control seldom remains steady. In fact, the prior example from *Richard III* launches this idea as Queen Margaret's aside addresses the presence of a woman's power. On the contrary, the final set of asides from *Titus Andronicus* eventually supports the restoration of male domination. To understand such conclusions, one must first acknowledge the types of asides and study their influential presence in both plays. After doing so, I examine the final speaker of each aside since he or she reveals intriguing outcomes that ultimately challenge the woman's role in a patriarchal society.

Intricately imbedded in the theme of revenge, the aside provides revealing information regarding the disputing intentions of each play's main characters. To fulfill their cruel intentions fueled by the need to restore justice based on either familial or individual reasons *Richard III's* Queen Margaret and Richard as well as *Titus Andronicus'* Tamora and Titus rely on minor characters; in both, a man and a woman battle to compete for the power that, essentially, stems from intentions to seek vengeance upon the another. Additionally, the

convention reveals evil undertones prompting the audience's interest in such characters that can be imbedded in the historical context of the era. Jean Howard adds to Lopez's notion when noting that asides essentially "flatter" the audience by "inviting [them] to join the select company of the witty and the insightful ..." (346). Thus, in using them, Shakespeare places the audience as his confidant and primary focus.

Not to be confused with the larger soliloquies that intensify the feelings of Shakespeare's most memorable characters, the asides are mini-versions of his characters' abrupt thoughts. Lopez notes the difference between the soliloquy and the aside; the former "tend[s] to be an explicit product of the relationship between playwright and audience, [while the latter] develops a relationship between single characters and the audience, and thus [has] a more immediate interpretive effect" (56). With this in mind, I will consider the "immediate interpretive effect" Lopez alludes to in light of two of Shakespeare's earlier plays, *Richard III* (1592) and *Titus Andronicus* (1593). Because the speaker is granted moments to converse with the audience during various scenes, he or she has control over the play's action. Thus, the aside essentially reveals intriguing discourse of power; one can stabilize this idea of the aside as discourse of power using both M.M. Bakhtin and Michel Foucault's respective studies in *Discourse in the Novel* and *The History of Sexuality*. However, prior to establishing how each writer's studies support the ongoing power struggle between the sexes, I will first introduce then examine the context and types of asides as both contribute to and further benefit this discussion.

Interestingly, the term "aside" did not appear in Shakespeare's original folios. Lopez notes that the convention was in fact an "editorial construct" (59). However, this does not mean that they did not exist when he wrote. John Russell Brown in *Shakespeare and the Theatrical Event* further indicates that many of the actors were aware of the aside's presence and acted

appropriately to fulfill its crucial role in the play (19). Because the folios were created for the actors, who were instinctively aware of the convention sans any indication of the literal word, “aside,” they expected or understood the places for each (Brown 19). However, when the plays were published for readers who had not or would not see productions, editors found it necessary to incorporate the “asides” to ensure their understanding of the plays’ actions (Brown 19).

As previously mentioned, the aside is frequently related to the soliloquy to drive the action of the play. However, since this discussion will focus on what asides reveal about each character and how they affect the audience, Lopez’s earlier point regarding the difference between both techniques must be recollected: the character’s relationship with the audience is emphasized through the aside, as opposed to the playwright’s relationship to the audience in the soliloquy. In addition to this, the obvious difference between the soliloquy and aside is distinguished by mere length. While the soliloquy is characterized by the elongated speech, Warren D. Smith notes the aside is a much shorter convention consisting of a maximum of four lines, although he does acknowledge some exceptions (52).² With the typical length established, the aside can be further categorized into types. In his book, *Shakespeare and the Audience*, Arthur Colby Sprague discusses the aside as “something said by one of the dramatic characters to another (or others) not intended to be heard by all of those present” (67) while in his book, *Shakespeare at the Globe*, Bernard Beckerman later classifies this type of aside as “conversational” (186). Sprague further notes a second type of aside as “what is very like a soliloquy (usually short) spoken while other characters are present – and known to be present by the speaker – but unheard by them” (67-68). Beckerman discusses this type of aside that is

² Smith’s *Shakespeare’s Playhouse Practice* notes longer asides in *Othello* and *Measure for Measure*.

particularly focused on the audience as the “solo aside”³ (186). He further acknowledges Smith’s third type of aside which “appear[s] to be aimed at rather than addressed to, another character on stage – and the words are evidently not intended for his ears or any others” (66). Beckerman includes this type within the second category of the “solo aside” (186).⁴ Thus, for the purpose of this discussion, the conversational and solo aside will be considered as an important contribution to the existing power struggle between characters. Because conversational asides are heard by some characters and solo asides are intended strictly for the audience, the latter type indicates a sign of more power. When Shakespeare allows characters to directly address the audience, he is giving them a sense of more control, worthy of consideration. Thus, the presence of both influences one’s readings of *Richard III* and *Titus Andronicus*.

Since the aside is so closely related to the soliloquy with the distinctive quality of length, J. L. Styan’s list of their function in *Shakespeare’s Stagecraft* can be illuminating. He notes the following four categories:

1. For the *character* speaking: to define him, strengthen his reality, reveal his secrets and review his motives ...
2. For the *theme* of the play: to propound or point the moral significance of an action already witnessed ...
3. For the *player’s* performance: to give him the chance to share an emotion with the spectator, and touch off his feelings ..., and
4. For the *audience* in relation to the progress of the action ... (165-166)

With the exception of point three, all of the other categories are imperative to this discussion since the aside essentially influences each play’s characters, theme, and audience. They demonstrate the characters’ struggles for power through villainous motives, a clear indication of

³ From this point on, I will use Beckerman’s classification of the solo and conventional asides since each crucially contributes to the discussion of power.

⁴ Smith counts 418 “conversational asides” and 417 “solo asides” in his book and subsequently indicates 76 instances of this third type of aside. See page 65.

the first category since they are defined by their actions or discourse. At the same time, these asides essentially emphasize the importance of the play's theme of revenge since it becomes the driving point for most of the characters' actions, which in turn, simultaneously adds to category one while fulfilling category two. Finally, the fourth component is complete as both of these relate to the audience. In fact, the audience plays a crucial role as to why a particular theme is often targeted by many plays of Shakespeare, as well as those of his contemporaries. Thus, it is imperative to keep these functions in mind when tracing the roles of the asides as the power pendulum between the sexes throughout each play.⁵

Because revenge is the common theme, and since *Richard III* and *Titus Andronicus* were written so closely to one another, it is worthy to first explore the Renaissance's preoccupation with this motif. From such a study, Styan's focus on the audience that the soliloquy yields can be justly supported through the aside. As Fredson Thayer Bowers traces revenge in his book *Elizabethan Revenge Tragedy 1587-1642*, he first establishes the history of revenge from earlier eras which eventually led into the Elizabethan times where it had "scarcely declined" (8). Bowers makes relevant distinctions between murder and manslaughter by way of a person's malice and intent. He then notes that while "private punishment, indeed, was not legal" the "Elizabethan sentiment was on the side of the revenger" (10). Thus, if one were to question Shakespeare's intentions regarding the speakers of these "solo" asides with the audience, it seems correct to infer that his choice was based on Bowers' idea since the audience would have understood and in some cases pitied the avenging character. The idea is interesting to acknowledge since Richard, Queen Margaret, Tamora, and Titus will essentially use the aside to reveal their motives to the audience; yet, whom the audience pities is undoubtedly influenced by

⁵ Maurice Charney interestingly explores the didactic construct of the asides in *Hamlet* in his article, "The stage situation of Asides, Soliloquies, and Offstage Speech in *Hamlet*."

the sex of each character, a point that will be later developed in favor of the men. Nonetheless, Bowers continues to note that “Elizabethans were conscious of the earlier periods of lawlessness when revenge was a right ...” (11). Eventually, however, Elizabethan law would, in fact, punish those who sought out “blood revenge for the murder of a close relative ...” but the process was slow (Bowers 11,12). Such information, then, adequately suits both plays since each character has his or her own motives for revenge. Margaret, Titus and Tamora seek vengeance in the name of familial honor while Richard seeks vengeance for individual gain.

Bowers later alludes to the obsessive qualities society had with violence since the Elizabethan “who attended public executions as an amusement was used to the sight of blood and would scarcely flinch from it on the stage” (16); in fact, “he would demand it” (16). Thus, if one were to question the excessive violence that all of the characters participate in at one point or another, it is, or at least, was justified as an appeal to the audience’s pleasure. As a result, these asides would come from the characters who hoped to use violence in an attempt to regain power and avenge their familial or individual names. Bowers likewise notes that “points of honor and political grudges kept quarrels smouldering during Elizabeth’s reign ...” (17). The audience would no doubt thrive on what Shakespeare presents from both the historical and tragic standpoint in both plays. In fact, Mary Crapo Hyde further supports such an inference by adding that “a writer of an Elizabethan tragedy would be most likely to produce a successful play if he chose as his theme either ambition or revenge” (27). It is no surprise to see, then, Shakespeare’s ability to intertwine both ideas in *Richard III* and *Titus Andronicus* as Richard, Queen Margaret, Titus and Tamora exude a clear ambition for revenge. Such a preoccupation with revenge, therefore, becomes the foundation of the power struggle that occurs between the sexes by way of the asides which serve the role of an ongoing discourse with each of the plays’ conflicting

characters. Thus, in an attempt to analyze such a concept, one must consider the idea of the aside as a discourse of power grounded in both Bakhtinian and Foucaultian studies.

In the “Discourse in the Novel” from *The Dialogic Imagination*, M. M. Bakhtin considers the notion of discourse within the novel along with the presence of heteroglossia. According to Bakhtin, “heteroglossia, once incorporated into the novel (whatever the forms for its incorporation), is another’s speech in another language, serving to express authorial intentions but in a refracted way” (324). This “refraction” then supports Lopez’s distinction in the aside as a relationship between the character and audience as opposed to the playwright and audience. Shakespeare’s intentions are “refracted” by way of his characters’ roles in the play. Therefore, though the essay is based on the novel, it applies aptly to all spoken texts: “Every concrete utterance of a speaking subject serves as a point where centrifugal as well as centripetal forces are brought to bear” (Bakhtin 272). One can see that such ideas are inherent in all genres as many speaking characters yield some type of conflict. Thus, from such a statement regarding opposing “forces,” one notes the notion of the power struggle within drama through the asides since each represents the “utterance[s] of a speaking subject.” Yet, most imperative is Bakhtin’s discussion of “heterogeneous stylistic unities” classified in a list of five factors. Of each, his is referral to “the stylistically individualized speech of characters” (Bakhtin 262) is the primary focus essential for this paper since conversations through each character’s aside reveal the struggle for power and revenge. Each of these “utterances” (Bakhtin 272) or forms of speeches “permits a multiplicity of social voices and a wide variety of their links and interrelationships ...” that are traceable throughout the text (Bakhtin 263). In this case, the discourse that occurs between the characters through the asides will present such ideas of revenge through violence which have already been developed and noted in conjunction with the Elizabethan era. Because

the speakers of the aside disperse utterances making them “particip[ants] in the ‘unitary language,’” (272) Bakhtin’s following point is vital to this developing discussion: “It is possible to give a concrete and detailed analysis of any utterance, once having exposed it as a contradiction-ridden, tension-filled unity of two embattled tendencies in the life of language” (272). In both plays, then, the asides are undoubtedly “tension-filled” as they continuously support the relentless quest for revenge between the “two embattled tendencies” which, in this case, are the speaking characters. Bakhtin’s material, likewise, correlates with Foucault since both consider forms of power or forces in their studies. While the latter explicates the notion of discourse, the former topic of power is a predominating factor in *The History of Sexuality* where Foucault examines it as a component of sexuality.

In one section of his book, Foucault discusses the “Rule of the Tactical Polyvalence of Discourses” which is an imperative segment relative to this discussion. He associates discourse with a “multiplicity of discursive elements that come into play in various strategies” and from these he acknowledges the “different effects – according to who is speaking, his position of power, the institutional context in which he happens to be situated – that it implies” (100). This statement is influential as each of the speaking characters of the plays reveals distinctive qualities regarding the larger power struggle constantly occurring between the sexes. Most important, however, is his following statement: “Discourse transmits and produces power: it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it” (101). This is exactly what occurs between the asides as each particular one serves the role of the Bakhtinian “utterance” which likewise reveals the ongoing conflict between the sexes. Foucault earlier notes “where there is power, there is resistance,” (95) a point that will properly support the later examples to follow from each play since power becomes an ever-fixed mark. Evident

from the asides, each of the characters is in a constant push-pull relationship supporting the notion of an existing and inescapable resistance that supports the quest for domination.

Now that the aside has been properly grounded in each of these critics' studies, one can observe how the discourse of power through the convention unfolds in each of the plays. From such a study, conclusions can be made regarding power in the sexes based on the women's position at the close of both plays. Maurice Charney's *All of Shakespeare* claims that *Richard III* "strongly influences Shakespeare's later depiction of the villain, as we may see in Aaron in *Titus Andronicus*, Iago in *Othello*, and Edmund in *King Lear*" (140). Such is crucial to note since Aaron's villainy later reflects Richard's and interestingly adds to one's understanding of Tamora's eventual fate. In addition, Joel Elliot Slotkin comments that little is known of the audience reception to *Richard III*, but that "the title page for the First Quarto (1597) strongly suggests that the interest of the play for an Elizabethan audience lies in its display of evil" (13) which only reinforces Bowers' previous distinction regarding the era's preoccupation with revenge and violence. Valerie Traub additionally asserts "the importance of gender and sexuality [as] evident even in the history play, a genre that focuses almost exclusively on the military and political exploits of men" (132). Thus, it is interesting to start the discussion with this earlier well received history play and note how the deception of this villainous character's quest for power is supported by the aside while considering the women's role throughout.

Before establishing the significance of the aside, one must first acknowledge the type of character being conveyed to the audience based on Styan's earlier observations regarding the soliloquy. Richard's opening soliloquy reveals a yearning for individual revenge that stems from his own deformity: "...I in this weak piping time of peace / Have no delight to pass away the time, / Unless to spy my shadow in the sun / And descant on mind own deformity" (1.1.24-27).

Richard III is on a quest for power, adamant to remove all his kin who stand in the way of the crown: “I am determined to prove a villain / And hate the idle pleasure of these days” (1.1.30-31). Richard’s plot to set his older brother, Clarence, against the reigning King Edward is established. As if such an evil demeanor does not immediately uphold the audience’s perception of Richard, his prior murders of Prince Edward and King Henry VI are exposed at the close of the first act and scene. As he reveals his intentions to marry Lady Anne, he openly questions, “What though I killed her husband and her father?” (1.1.154). Thus, the audience’s first and last impression of this character is adequately instilled early on to emphasize the tyranny of this man who does not acknowledge moral obstacles in his quest for authority. Such soliloquies essentially precede the asides that will further explicate the idea of the power struggle between Queen Margaret and Richard.

In addition to Richard’s disheartening behavior as a determining factor of the audience’s perception of him, the minor characters further recognize a sense of his evil. Interestingly enough, the play’s women do so. In the second act, Lady Anne is introduced lamenting over the deaths of her father-in-law and husband and curses the murderer as well as his future wife, who ironically she will become. Upon seeing Richard, she immediately assumes a severe tone denouncing him as “devil” and “dreadful minister of hell” (1.2.45, 46). Queen Elizabeth is the second woman who denounces Richard’s character. As she speaks to her sons, she contemplates what will become of them upon King Edward’s death: “Ah, he is young, and his minority / Is put unto the trust of Richard Gloucester, / A man that loves not me – nor none of you” (1.3.11-13). Although Richard is her brother-in-law, she too insinuates strained relations between him and her family. As the two begin to bicker over Clarence’s imprisonment, Queen Elizabeth directly addresses Richard: “God grant we never may have need of you” (1.3.76). Thus, the first

two women, whom the audience is exposed to, establish a strong antipathy toward the obvious villain. However, it is from the third woman's reaction that the aside plays the imperative role of establishing the ongoing conflict between Queen Margaret and Richard. She essentially represents all of the women in her mission to restore good over evil by seeking revenge on the man who has destroyed her family.

Queen Margaret listens as Queen Elizabeth and Richard argue. From this, a series of solo asides⁶, launches the discourse of power that follows. A total of seven asides are spoken, however, those that are most important immediately challenge Richard's lines to Queen Elizabeth. Of the four times Richard speaks, an aside is delivered by Queen Margaret setting up a juxtaposition between these two characters and the power struggles that will later dominate the play. In each of these, Queen Margaret immediately reveals her reasons for loathing Richard: "Thou killed'st my husband Henry in the Tower, / And Edward, my poor son, at Tewkesbury" (1.3.119-120). As she continues to spy on Queen Elizabeth and Richard's conversation, the audience listens to these remarks and becomes sympathetic to her. Thus, according to Styan's classifications regarding the soliloquy, one notes the way the asides define her character by "reveal[ing her] secrets and thus enabling a "review of [her] motives" (165). Such revelations continue as Richard states, "Withal, what I have been, and what I am," and Queen Margaret states, "A murd'rous villain, and so still thou art" (1.3.133-134). Each time he speaks, he is undercut by Margaret's furious words that demonstrate her advantageous power over Richard as well as the audience's perception. Richard then states "Poor Clarence did forsake his father Warwick – / Ay, and forswore himself, which Jesu pardon –" and Margaret adds, "Which God revenge!" (1.3.137). And thus in support of Styan's second criterion the motive or theme of the

⁶ Any mention of the solo aside supports Beckerman's definition as a reference to the audience. From the analyses that follow, the solo aside indicates definite control as opposed to the conversational aside's partial control.

play is established within the retort. However, in the last exchange between the two, Richard states, "I am too childish-foolish for this world," (1.3.142) which is his attempt at eliciting Queen Elizabeth's pity. But, Queen Margaret replies, "Hie thee to hell for shame, and leave this world, / Thou cacodemon; there they kingdom is" (1.3.143-144). Thus, Richard's evil character, the play's theme, and Margaret's motives are firmly fixed by these series of asides. Howard notes the following comments in this crucial scene:

...Margaret's presence and her devastating language persistently interpose themselves between us and the two figures who a moment before had dominated our interest. As her voice, enumerating a list of past crimes, overshadows the present quarrel, the audience gains an ironic perspective upon the quarrel and a distance from it. We have knowledge which Richard and Elizabeth lack; we see an enemy whom they do not perceive. (349)

This assumption regarding Margaret as an "enemy" is interesting as it essentially alludes to the audience's negative sense of evil in her character. However, based on my perception, she should not elicit this response since she is merely acting upon her need to avenge the death of her husband and son. Thus, Howard's comment, though minute, essentially supports woman's inability to overcome the dominating patriarchy since he alludes to her negative role as enemy rather than sympathetic worthy mother and wife.

Nevertheless, Margaret's strength is evident based solely on this brief encounter.

Excluding this scene, her presence in the play is limited. However, during the time she and Richard converse, she places a curse on him that leads to his eventual fall (1.3.214-230). Prior to noting the aftermath of such words, one must note the subsequent asides that are spoken by Richard, demonstrating his temporary power over the other characters and the audience. The more asides granted to a character the closer the audience will feel to that particular person. Roy

E. Aycock notes “The Renaissance was inordinately fascinated by stage villains, and Richard III, that irresistible combination of hypocrite and tyrant, was a special favorite” (75), thus explaining Richard’s constant relationship with the audience by way of the asides. Most interesting to note is the way the men and the women converse with Richard. The women follow Margaret by eventually confronting and challenging this evil figure, while the men seem to ignore Richard as a potential threat and succumb to his control. Thus, the resistance Foucault introduces regarding power is evident early on between the sexes. Such an observation will lend to a later conclusion regarding the roles of men and women in each of the plays.

After Margaret has left the stage, Richard continues to speak about her curse to Queen Elizabeth and Rivers. The men are completely oblivious to Richard’s underlying motives to gain power though he makes his wickedness perfectly clear to the audience as he speaks to himself: “...being well advised: / For had I cursed now, I had cursed myself” (1.3.316-317). He is well aware of his wrong doings and knows that had he joined Rivers in cursing the murderers of King Henry and Prince Edward, he would be cursing himself. Thus, he rejects doing so and the audience is able to see his duplicitous hold on the men by way of this aside. Slotkin notes Richard is “an artist who designs his creations explicitly to please the audience as well as to manipulate the other characters” (16). Such a point reinforces Lopez’s distinction between the soliloquy and aside as the relationship between his character and the audience is emphasized over the relationship between playwright and audience. Although Richard has a demanding sly presence that leads to his easy manipulation of the male characters, the women of the play detect his intentions early on. As such, the resistance Foucault discusses in *The History of Sexuality* resonates within many of these following scenes evident by the women’s reception of Richard. From them, one can acknowledge the consistent struggle between the sexes.

Richard's later aside when speaking to his mother further supports the female acumen. However, one must establish the relationship between mother and son before noting such a connection. Like Lady Anne's first reaction towards Richard, as well as the hateful retorts of Queen Elizabeth and Queen Margaret, Richard's own mother perceives her son's devious nature: "'He is my son, ay, and therein my shame; / Yet from my dugs he drew not this deceit'" (2.2.29-30). To hear a mother deny her son gives one reason to question why Richard has come to embody such evil and vengeful motives. She later adds "And I for comfort have but one false glass, / That grieves me when I see my shame in him" (2.2.53-54). Both the Duchess and Queen Elizabeth lament their respective loss of children and husband and clearly place the blame upon duplicitous Richard. Yet, when he appears on the scene, they hide their true feelings, perhaps out of fear, evident in the way the Duchess addresses him: "God bless thee, and put meekness in thy breast, / Love, charity, obedience, and true duty" (2.2.95-96). What sounds like an innocent wish expressed from a mother to son is clarified by Richard's following aside: "'And make me die a good old man.' / That is the butt-end of a mother's blessing; / I marvel that her grace did leave it out" (2.2.97-99). Through this aside, Richard reveals his advantageous knowledge of his mother's false love. Had she been true, she would have given her full blessing. Because she does not include these words in her conversation with him, Richard is further inclined to continue his deceitful vengeance. His manipulative ways do not fool women. Therefore, he must focus on the men in his quest for revenge because they do not have as much power.

Thus, the following series of asides are addressed to the young Prince Edward who, along with his brother, becomes the next victim of Richard's rage. Edward, like many of the men in the play, trusts Richard as he seeks advice from him regarding where he and his brother should stay until the coronation. It is from such an inquiry that Richard plots to murder the heirs to the

throne and confines their stay in the tower. Richard's aside soon after reveals his evil intentions: "So wise so young, they say, do never live long" (3.1.79-80). In these lines, Richard's quest to seize power of the crown is evident as the scene foreshadows the death of the young Prince. His evil intentions are therefore magnified by this aside. Richard's successive solo asides lead the audience to believe that control has shifted away from Margaret's curse; he has a firm hold of his pursuit for power evident by his constant relationship with the audience and in doing so he eventually facilitates his way to the top by seizing the throne. After Prince Edward tries to understand this aside, Richard misleads him to believing that he stated: "I say, 'Without characters fame lives long'" (3.1.81) Yet, he subsequently adds another aside: "Thus like the formal Vice, Iniquity, / I moralize two meanings in one word" (3.1.82-83). Richard's conniving use of the aside to undercut each of the Prince's lines is much like those delivered by Margaret in their earlier exchange. Its presence in Queen Margaret's speech suggests her power or grip over the audience's opinion regarding her justified quest to avenge the lives of her family members. During this time, her motives are clear. Yet, now, power has shifted towards Richard as he continues with his cruel intentions. Thus, this is a primary example demonstrating how the aside acts as the swinging pendulum between the two dominant characters. The following asides continue to further support such a notion. After Prince Edward alludes to his future life as a king, Richard reveals, "Short summers lightly have a forward spring" (3.1.94). This phrase is a proverb indicating that "those who die young ('forward') are often ('lightly') precocious" (Norton 550), and alluding to Edward's lack of intelligence that will lead to his early death. As such, the aside once again foreshadows his death. At this point, Richard seems to have full control over the men, especially Catesby and Buckingham; however, unlike Richard's loyal followers, Lord Hastings does not adhere to Richard's motives.

From the scene to follow, Bakhtin's concepts of "internally persuasive discourse" and "authoritarian enforced discourse" (345) from "The Topic of the Speaking Person"⁷ must be acknowledged as it supports Richard's firm grasp of power in the asides spoken by secondary male characters. Because of his authoritative power over Catesby and Buckingham, when they actually speak, it is "internally persuasive discourse." Bakhtin notes the following to explicate such a notion: "Internally persuasive discourse – as opposed to one that is externally authoritative – is, as it is affirmed through assimilation, tightly interwoven with 'one's own word'" (345). In other words, these characters are unknowingly controlled by Richard's motives; therefore, as they speak their asides, they are essentially supporting his evil intentions which are further indication of his powerful grip over them. Bakhtin includes a footnote to support this notion that likewise contributes to the discussion of power in the play: "One's own discourse is gradually and slowly wrought out of others' words that have been acknowledged and assimilated, and the boundaries between the two are at first scarcely perceptible" (345). This statement adequately supports the scene that follows as both Catesby and Buckingham are persuaded by Richard's misleading persona and therefore use the asides to unknowingly speak on behalf of his ambitious motives. Thus, Richard's discourse is "externally authoritative" in that he follows his own intentions whereas the others are simply persuaded by him.

To understand such a concept, it is important to note how these three men interact with one another during the following scene. During the times Richard is unable to use the aside and directly supplant his authority over others, the convention is passed on to both Catesby and Buckingham. However, because of his authoritative hold over the men, their words yield Bakhtin's "internally persuasive discourse" and from this, Richard's presence and strong sense of control over others is established through their asides. As both men speak with Lord Hastings,

⁷ This is one part of the larger essay "Discourse in the Novel" from *The Dialogic Imagination*.

he clearly reveals his dislike of Richard: "I'll have this crown of mine cut from my shoulders / Before I'll see the crown so foul misplaced" (3.2.40-41). In fact, Lord Hastings' lack of an aside supports his independence from Richard; he is not controlled by him and therefore, will not speak on his behalf. Richard's followers immediately respond. Catesby first states, "The Princes both make high account of you" which is immediately followed by an aside: "For they account his head upon the bridge" (3.2.66-67). He foreshadows Hastings' eventual death as the footnote indicates a reference to London bridge as a place "where the heads of traitors were displayed on poles" (Norton 554). These words are similar to Richard's earlier asides that foreshadowed Edward's death and likewise emphasize his authoritative ability over the men. Unbeknownst to Catesby's intentions, Lord Hastings agrees to follow Buckingham whose later arrival on the scene indicates his journey to the tower where the Princes are being held under false pretenses. Buckingham states that he will not stay long and Hastings agrees stating, "Nay, like enough, for I stay dinner there" (3.2.116). Buckingham immediately responds with the following aside, "And supper too, although thou know'st it not" (3.2.117). Like Catesby, he alludes to Hastings' future confinement and death at the tower should he continue his disparagement of Richard. Thus, Richard's growing power becomes intensified as he is able to use the men to carry out his intentions, all of which we learn by way of asides to the audience.

Richard resumes his authoritative discourse by way of this literary convention when all of the characters meet at the tower. His first aside in the scene reveals his plan to eliminate Hastings: "...That he will lose his head ere give consent / His 'master's child'..." (3.4.36-37). Within moments, his command is confirmed as Richard openly declares Hastings' execution. After hearing these orders, Hastings immediately acknowledges the power of Margaret's curse: "O Margaret, Margaret! Now thy heavy curse / Is lighted on poor Hastings' wretched head"

(3.4.92-93). Although Margaret's presence is not as prominent as Richard's, her curse now acts with the same command as Richard's asides. In addition to Hastings, many of the characters sentenced to death similarly acknowledge Margaret's prophecies. In fact, Rivers, Gray, and Ratcliffe had done so in a prior scene, and thereby launching the chain of similar responses. Gray first states, "Now Margaret's curse is fall'n upon our heads, / For standing by when Richard stabbed her son (3.3.14-15). Rivers follows stating, "Then cursed she Hastings; then cursed she Buckingham; / Then cursed she Richard. O remember, God" (3.3.16-17). Such laments remind the audience of the power within her curse that eventually prevails over Richard's. Thus, Margaret's presence weaves its way throughout the play by the other characters' recollection of her curse; these secondary characters reinforce her control much in the same fashion Buckingham and Catesby reinforce Richard's with their asides. Thus, Bakhtin's internally persuasive discourse similarly applies to these men though, this time, in favor of Margaret's authority through her curses. Although Richard manipulates these men to his advantage, they pose a threat to him once they speak for themselves. In such circumstances, Richard must resort to murder. Traub notes "the transmission of patriarchal and royal power is almost always a moment of social weakness, exposing a contradiction at the heart of patriarchal society: whereas men rely on one another to support structures of male dominance, they must also be willing to kill one another" (138). Thus, in this case, Richard must kill Hastings. Yet, ironically, in doing so, he further lends authority to Queen Margaret over the power of his own evil plot because his actions are merely reinforcing her curse.

Such is evident in the scene between Richard and Buckingham, the next victim of Margaret's curse. At this point, Richard has successfully seized the throne, and plans to kill the princes to secure his title. When Buckingham seems to question Richard's motives, Catesby

notes Richard's anger in a conversational aside: "The King is angry. See, he gnaws his lip" (4.2.28). This conversational aside demonstrates Catesby's lack of control as it is immediately followed by Richard's solo aside: "High reaching Buckingham grows circumspect" (4.2.32). Moments later he uses yet another aside to reveal his bloody motive: "The deep-revolving, witty Buckingham / No more shall be the neighbor to my counsels" (4.2.43-44). With such a retort, Richard immediately recollects Margaret's curse as he is to become yet another victim on her list. Thus, the audience is aware of the outcome. Buckingham later confirms the curse when he is led to execution: "Thus Margaret's curse falls heavy on my neck. / 'When he', quoth she, ' shall split thy heart with sorrow, / Remember Margaret was a prophetess" (5.1.25-27). Although each of these characters is sentenced to death by Richard, Margaret's curse is always acknowledged in their last words. Clearly, her power is acknowledged over Richard's. In fact, Richard's asides actually reinforce Bakhtin's internally persuasive discourse since they essentially support Margaret's authority in her curse.

Much in the same way Queen Elizabeth and the Duchess of York initially perceive Richard's cruelty, they sense Margaret's influence and support it in a scene that presents the play's final asides. The women's intuition and acumen are starting to dominate the play. The convention is no longer given to Richard, but instead, to Queen Margaret as she eavesdrops on the lamentations of Queen Elizabeth and the Duchess of York. Queen Elizabeth first speaks of her dead sons to which Queen Margaret responds with an aside: "Hover about her, say that right for right / Hath dimmed your infant morn to aged night" (4.4.15-16). A footnote explicates these lines: "Even-handed justice has destroyed the bright hopes of our young lives" (Norton 573). Thus, Queen Margaret feels justice has been served since her suffering is now felt by the same women who initially dismissed her in Act 1. This is further supported by her next aside:

“Plantagenet doth quit Plantagenet; / Edward for Edward pays a dying debt” (4.4.20-21). She feels that Elizabeth’s loss of her son, Edward, now compensates for her own Edward, who had been killed by the Plantagenet Richard. Her bitter remarks over the loss of both a son and husband are further confirmed with the play’s last aside: “When holy Harry died, and my sweet son” (4.4.25). This further supports Styan’s factors as it reveals her motive for revenge thereby supporting both the play’s theme and the explication of her character in an aside. Therefore, it is because of these two deaths that such a disastrous curse dominated Richard’s malicious intentions. As such, revenge grounded in maternal love seems to overpower that of any man. Queen Elizabeth and the Duchess of York are also aware of Margaret’s strength as she states her hunger for revenge (4.4.61) and further prays for Richard’s death (4.4.77), so much so that they seek Margaret’s help in cursing Richard which leads to her final words of the play: “Thy woes will make them [the curses] sharp and pierce like mine” (4.4.124-125).

Adhering to this advice, both Elizabeth and the Duchess confront Richard as his own mother delivers a frightening curse emblematic of Queen Margaret’s: “...Therefore take with thee my most heavy curse...Bloody thou art, bloody will be thy end; / Shame serves they life, and doth thy death attend” (4.4.188,195-196). Once again, Bakhtin is recalled as their discourse is persuaded by Queen Margaret’s authoritative power much in the same way that Richard had done with the male characters. From these words, the women have prevailed, though under Margaret’s influence. Richard does, in fact, die a bloody death when he is slain by Richmond who becomes King Henry VII and restores order within the country. Queen Margaret’s final words, therefore, act as a torch of power being passed from the pain of one woman to that of two others. Unlike Richard’s pathetic last words, “My kingdom for a horse!” (5.7.13), Queen Margaret’s were strong enough to overthrow this relentless man. Therefore, she leaves the play

with dignity while he dies with shame. The asides are no longer heard after the exchange between these women because Richard's power is crushed. With the combined strength of three women's curses, there is no longer a way for him to dominate others. Roy E. Aycock suggests woman's domination over the patriarchy in his article, "Duel Progression in *Richard III*," in noting how their curses "join those of Margaret's as agents of justice in an ever-widening scheme to insure Richard's destruction" (73). Therefore, from such an observation, the power in the final aside then seems to rest with Margaret since she is the last to communicate with the audience. This thereby reinforces her rightful revenge upon Richard that the audience would undoubtedly support contrary to Howard's initial observation of Margaret as "enemy."

However, Aycock notes an extremely interesting point regarding Margaret's earlier curse that essentially supports the dominance of patriarchy. She had stated, "Cancel his bond of life, dear God, I plead, / That I may live and say, 'the dog is dead'" (4.4.77-78). Aycock notes that "for complete satisfaction, she needs to learn that her curse has worked on Richard" (73), but later he notes that "Shakespeare does not give her the opportunity to witness...the fulfillment of her curse on (and, of course, her victory over) Richard himself" (78). Instead it is a man, Richmond, who declares the lines, "The bloody dog is dead" (5.8.2). Traub's article interestingly notes the chaos in Shakespeare's plays that disrupt the social order, but eventually it is restored as evident by Richmond's succession of the throne (132). Thus, regardless of Queen Margaret's clear power in terms of speaking the final aside and avenging her family's deaths, in the end, because she is a woman, power can never completely reside in her hands made evident by the way Shakespeare has a man finish her curse. From such a conclusion, one can see how power is unstable as it momentarily rests in Margaret's hands only to be seized by a man thereby

supporting the endless conflict occurring between the sexes adequately represented by the swinging pendulum.

The power struggles between men and women are thus established by way of the aside within this earlier history and continue on in his early tragedy. Shakespeare's next play, *Titus Andronicus*, interestingly sets up a similar resistance between a powerful woman and a man, while the asides continue to support Styron's factors regarding the development of character, audience relationships, and theme. Once again, revenge ignites much of the evil action between both villainous and virtuous characters. Deborah Willis notes women's "marginalized" traditional roles in revenge narratives (24) though he later comments that Shakespeare "brings out a feature of women's roles that tended to be suppressed" (24). From such a comment, one immediately considers the play's two women as Lavinia clearly represents the "marginalized" woman, and Tamora essentially embodies the opposite role. Though Tamora does exude behavior uncharacteristic to her gender, I argue that essentially she falls into this marginalized category as both women falter under the dominating Andronicus patriarchy. Thus, Tamora assumes the same unjustified position as Queen Margaret thereby questioning woman's place in revenge. Once again, both Bakhtin and Foucault's essays crucially support this developing discussion of power as the asides continue to act as the push-pull discourse either supporting or dismissing the villainies of Titus and Tamora. As such, they work much in the same manner as portrayed throughout *Richard III* to show a progression of power through the swinging pendulum; however, once more, in the end, the men eventually prove superior to the women. Before developing such a discussion, one must first acknowledge the vengeance that ignites both Tamora and Titus.

The play opens with the questionable heir of the throne after the late emperor of Rome has died. Although Titus's bravery in the war against Rome initially suggests his candidacy as the new emperor, he eventually rejects it and insists the younger Saturninus accept the title. Titus has returned from war with two dead sons along with his prisoners of the Goths: Queen Tamora, her three sons, and Aaron the Moor. To compensate for his pain for his two lost children, Titus sacrifices Tamora's eldest son despite her desperate pleas. This is the first of many violent actions through the play supporting Bower's historical context regarding audience tolerance and even preference of both violence and revenge. As such, the first reference to revenge is evoked by Tamora's son, Demetrius: "...With opportunity of sharp revenge / Upon the Thracian tyrant in his tent" (1.1.137-138). Tamora's opportunity is almost too effortless once Saturninus declares her as the new Empress of Rome (1.1.316-317). She, like Richard, is aware of the importance of an authoritative title for revenge. Therefore, her manipulative hold on Saturninus to assert her position as Empress resembles Richard's quest to eventually seize the throne. Without these high positions, their goal to avenge their families would not be possible though Richard has a clear advantage as a man. Thus, Titus's misfortunes that follow are inevitable as Tamora takes advantage of an authoritative position to avenge the man who killed her son.

Although the majority of asides in *Richard III* have been "solo," the presence of "conversational"⁸ asides are imperative to mention as they contribute to the developing vengeance between Titus and Tamora. Like Richard, Titus speaks many of the plays "solo" asides. However, because the majority of conversational asides in this play are spoken by Tamora, they indicate her lower status of power and additionally highlight her likewise

⁸ One must recollect my prior assertion of the conversational aside holding less power since, according to Beckerman, it is not solely intended for the audience, but may be for other characters as well.

impossible opportunity for sole feminine power. To explicate such an idea, the first aside of the play by Tamora is conversational and intended only for Saturninus to hear. Douglas E. Green in his article “Interpreting ‘Her Martyr’d Signs’: Gender and Tragedy in *Titus Andronicus*” notes how “Tamora’s aside to Saturninus exposes the dangers of this woman’s subtle power ...” (320). Because she does not have a solo aside, this symbolically indicates her lack of power and dependency on men as she must use a conversational aside to address Saturninus. Her role as woman does not allow her to avenge a man, in this case, Titus. Thus, Tamora eventually benefits from Titus’s inability to present Lavinia as Saturninus’s wife since she and Bassianus were already in love. Although Saturninus is humiliated by such a rejection from Lavinia, Tamora convinces him to forgive Titus. She uses the unfortunate situation to her advantage, and this aside reveals one part of the villainy that intensifies the play: “...I’ll find a day to massacre them all, / And raze their faction and their family, / The cruel father and his traitorous sons / To whom I sued for my dear son’s life...” (1.1.447-450). Despite such cruel proclamations, Tamora is solely incapable of producing such destruction. Traub supports this notion when asserting the following: “Because women generally were believed to be less rational than men, they were deemed to need male protection” (130). Unlike Queen Margaret, she is not a prophetess. Therefore, she must turn to Aaron, her “male protection” and supporter, who delivers many of the play’s following asides which adequately establishes the tyranny behind her actions. Once again Bakhtin’s notion of persuasive discourse is made clear since Tamora has Aaron reinforce her authoritative word over others. Thus, in the following scene, her authority is evident in the delivery of Aaron’s solo asides, indicating that while the power struggle is essentially between Tamora and Titus, he too assumes a vital role in his own intentions of villainy that resemble Richard’s.

Aaron first delivers a soliloquy proclaiming Tamora's new found status declaring his ability "to wait upon this new-made empress" (2.1.20) and hopes to join "this siren that will charm Rome's Saturnine / And see his shipwreck and his commonweal's" (2.1.23-24). To do so, Aaron takes part in his first conniving act upon Demetrius and Chiron. As he secretly observes the brothers arguing over possession of Lavinia, he states his first aside: "Clubs, clubs! These lovers will not keep the peace" (2.1.37). A demeaning tone is immediately established between Aaron and these men. Like Richard, he intends to use these men for his own motives. In this case, to please Tamora, he knows that Lavinia is the first target for revenge since their conversation expresses a sexual interest in her. As Demetrius and Chiron further argue over Lavinia, each man feels more worthy to pursue her over the other. Demetrius finally comes to the following conclusion: "Though Bassianus be the Emperor's brother, / Better than he have worn Vulcan's Badge" (2.1.88-89). The Norton footnote refers to the latter part of the quote as a man having been cuckolded (397). Though the reference is clearly intended for Bassianus, Lavinia's lover, Aaron's immediate aside reveals his darker intentions: "Ay, and as good as Saturninus may" (2.1.90). Much in the same way Chiron and Demetrius plan to cuckold Bassianus, Aaron's own desire for Tamora is clear as this statement foreshadows his intention to eventually make a cuckold of Saturninus. Tamora, therefore, takes advantage of her sexual influence over Aaron while Aaron takes advantage of each man's desire for Lavinia. In doing so, he suggests that they join forces and persuades both of them to rape Lavinia. Thus, Aaron masterminds the vengeance against Titus; however, it is derived by Tamora. The asides adequately support and develop these initial deceptive actions of the play since Aaron speaks the solos aside while Tamora continues using conversational asides. Willis supports this by stating "If it were not for the male initiative taken by Aaron, revenge might be derailed by wayward

female appetites” (10). However, Aaron is not the only male character who assists in her cruel motives for revenge as evident by the asides delivered by her sons. These asides essentially resemble Richard’s relationship with Catesby and Buckingham. They also evoke Bakhtin’s concept regarding the types of discourse since their words are essentially persuaded by those with authority, Tamora and Aaron.

Such is evident in the next scene when Chiron, Demetrius, Saturnius, Tamora, Bassianus, and Lavinia approach the hunting Titus with his three sons. While the group discusses hunting strategies, Demetrius slyly adds an aside before the close of the scene: “Chiron, we hunt not, we, with horse nor hound, / But hope to pluck a dainty doe to ground” (2.2.25-26). Here, the conversational aside establishes their lack of complete control as it essentially reinforces the authority from Aaron and Tamora. Because neither is present, one of their “pawns” must assume the speaking role of the aside further to establish the violent treachery to come. Violence thus becomes the male’s tool of avenging a wrong and ultimately further ignites the power struggle between the sexes. Lavinia is clearly the “doe” that will be “plucked,” actually raped by these two men. Tamora has successfully used the men to fulfill her deceitful motives, though her reliance on Aaron is clear. When they are finally together in the next scene, the manner with which each character feeds upon the other is exposed. Such a relationship is supported by the two conversational asides directed to one another. As previously mentioned, Tamora’s inability to converse with the audience by way of a “solo” aside further connotes her weakness in avenging Titus because of her sex. However, she advantageously uses her sexuality to control Aaron. Traub notes that at the time “women were considered to be more lustful than men” (129). Her lust proves effective since once alone, he relates his plan to rape Lavinia and kill Bassianus while addressing her throughout as “madam.” Such an address indicates his

subservient need to please her as he reveals the following: “Vengeance is in my heart, death in my hand, / Blood and revenge are hammering in my head” (2.3.38-39). His motives are fueled by his need to accommodate her wishes. To this point, other than Titus’s original imprisonment of him and Tamora, there is a lack of reason that leads one to understand his urge for vengeance; thus, his actions stem from Tamora’s quest to avenge her son’s death on Titus. Tamora’s aside states, “Ah, my sweet Moor, sweeter to me than life!” (2.3.51). Through such a comment, her manipulative capabilities become evident. As a woman, she thrives by her dominating sexual power characteristic of the *femme fatale* to complete her plan. Willis supports such an idea in stating that “lust, then does not cause revenge’s villainous excess; what Shakespeare shows instead is how lust may be harnessed to achieve revenge’s violent aims” (39). Aaron is clearly attracted to her, which she will take advantage of for her benefit. After all, much of the “dirty work” has been implanted by his wickedness. Aaron immediately replies with another aside: “No more, great Empress; Bassianus comes / Be cross with him, and I’ll go fetch they sons / To back they quarrels, whatsoe’er they be” (2.3.52-54). Through these asides, Aaron and Tamora’s alliance is then established. Unlike Margaret, Tamora’s reliance on a man for her vengeance seems to precipitate her eventual fall as her lack of independence associates her with Aaron’s villainy.

Such reliance on men is further demonstrated moments later as Bassianus affirms her strange meeting with Aaron: “Accompanied but with a barbarous Moor, / If foul desire had not conducted you?” (2.3.77-78). Because of such accusations, she resorts to desperate measures and lies to her sons regarding Bassianus and Lavinia’s intentions to tie her up and leave her to die. Her motives become clear: “Revenge it as you love your mother’s life, / Or be ye not henceforward called my children” (2.3.114-115). Tamora thrives on a maternal presence and

denounces her children in the name of revenge, a sad portrayal of the extreme cruelty behind her character. Once again, violence dominates the scene while appealing to the audience as both Demetrius and Chiron stab and kill Bassianus. Thus, these two men adhere to Tamora's orders much in the same way Aaron does. Her power over the men is further depicted as Demetrius and Chiron drag Lavinia away and she states, "Now will I hence to seek my lovely Moor, / And let my spleenful sons this trull deflower" (2.3.190-191). Her inability to pity Lavinia reflects Titus's at the start of the play; because he would not listen to Tamora's pleas, she likewise refuses to hear those of his daughter. After encouraging her sons' cruelty, she turns to Aaron to further deploy their plan of attack. With Quintus and Martius as the next victims, Aaron's plot to trap them in a pit and blame them for Bassianus's murder is revealed through an aside: "Now will I fetch the King to find them here, / That he thereby may have a likely guess / How these were they that made away his brother" (2.3.206-208). With their evil plan successfully established, the roles between Tamora and Titus are thereby reversed. Willis notes that "in triumphing over Titus, Tamora also makes him into her double" (46). Such is apparent in the following Act 3.

Suddenly, the same man who showed no remorse for Tamora pleads⁹ on behalf of his sons' lives but without success. Titus now has two sons on the brink of death, another banished, and a raped daughter. As he laments such hardship with his brother, Marcus, and the banished Lucius, it is no surprise to see Aaron making his way onto the scene with a proposition: one hand for Titus's sons. After the men argue over who will chop off the hand, Titus claims he will "deceive them both" by having Aaron cut off his own hand (3.1.185-186). The violence continues to support Bowers's cultural context of the era. In response to such a comment,

⁹ Judith M. Karr traces an interesting pattern of power by way of the pleas in her article, "The Pleas in Titus Andronicus."

Aaron's following aside reveals the harsh cruelty to come: "If that be called deceit, I will be honest / And never whilst I live deceive men so. / But I'll deceive you in another sort, / And that you'll say ere half an hour pass" (3.1.187-190). The play on the word deception is evident as it appears in all but the last line of this aside. However, the type of deception has yet to be determined, but Aaron's next aside essentially exposes it. He tells Titus that his hand will be exchanged for his two sons, but the aside that follows states: "Their heads, I mean. O, how this villainy / Doth fat me with the very thoughts of it! (3.1.201-202). The satisfaction he feels in such villainy delineates his malicious character. Although both Tamora and Titus have prior motives for revenge, he does not. Perhaps, he is the true definition of villainy as he thrives on the suffering of others.

Just as the roles are reversed on Titus regarding the cruelty placed upon his sons, the same will occur in the revenge of Titus on Tamora. Such a shift in power will be supported by the characters who deliver the following asides; the literary convention once again acts as the swinging pendulum, much in the same way it does in *Richard III*. After grieving over his raped daughter and dead sons, Titus's shift is established by his sudden eerie laughs. He makes his intentions known to Marcus: "Then which way shall I find Revenge's cave?" (3.1.269). Lavinia's rape essentially fuels his desire for vengeance and further supports women's submissive role to the patriarchy. Willis notes the feminist interpretations of the rape as critics "accuse Lavinia's male relatives of ignoring her suffering and acting as if the rape were to be understood solely as a stain on patriarchal family honor" (42). Such critics adequately reinforce woman's impossible role in a patriarchal society which is supported by the analysis of the asides. Not only is Lavinia raped, but her tongue is cut off which ultimately signifies her silence and hence, her "powerlessness" (Green 323). Thus, she is the prime example of the victimized

woman under male domination. Tamora will eventually follow this same path as Titus is consumed with the desire to avenge the Andronici name.

Thus, his authoritative commands over the others become clear as Lucius is sent to the Goths to raise an army against Tamora. Once Lavinia reveals the murderers to Titus and Marcus, it is important to note that Titus kills her only after she does so, further supporting her victimization under the patriarchy. With this newly acquired information, Young Lucius is sent to the palace to deliver weapons and a message; ironically, the boy becomes the means by which Titus establishes the revenge. Therefore, at one point or another, each authoritative power must disperse its discourse through the persuasion of minor characters. Similar to the way Tamora uses Aaron and her sons, Titus turns to this boy. However, the difference is clear since, unlike Tamora, essentially Titus can rely on his own violent actions to avenge his family. In this case, Young Lucius is a mere pawn that uses the aside to allude to the destruction to come. As in *Richard III*, Bakhtin's persuasive discourse is again noteworthy since all that the boy says to the Goths essentially alludes to Titus's authoritative word regarding his knowledge of Tamora's cruelty. Although he can not physically be at the palace, his presence is felt by way of the aside. As he delivers his message to Aaron, Chiron, and Demetrius, the asides reveal the realistic intentions of the visit. After he greets the men, Lucius immediately adds: "And pray the Roman gods confound you both" (4.2.6). Aware of their part in Lavinia's rape, Young Lucius turns to the gods to assist their revenge. When asked for the message, he responds with yet another solo aside, "That you are both deciphered, that's the news, / For villains marked with rape" (4.2.8-9). Here, a male child has more power in his solo aside than Tamora's conversational aside. In fact, this moment foreshadows his eventual role in restoring the social order rightfully dominated by the patriarchy. Although the motives Titus plans for his revenge are not as direct as Aaron's,

such comments attest to the shift of power in his favor. The asides place an emphasis on their crime as Young Lucius states that he will leave and adds in his last aside to address the enemies: “like bloody villains” (4.2.17).

Once Lucius is gone, Demetrius and Chrion read the scroll accompanying the weapons. Though they are naïve to the true intentions behind the verse of Horace, Aaron immediately deciphers its meaning while jesting with Demetrius and Chrion. This is done in another aside which establishes the clear power struggles now existing between the two adversaries:

Now what a thing it is to be an ass!

Here's no sound jest. The old man hath found their guilt,

And sends them weapons wrapped about with lines

That wound beyond their feeling to the quick.

But were our witty Empress well afoot

She would applaud Andronicus' conceit.

But let her rest in her unrest a while. (4.2.25-31)

The first part of the aside is intended for Chiron and Demetrius whose intelligence is constantly undercut by Aaron. Without his and Tamora's guidance, the boys lack any motives. Because Aaron immediately alludes to her, the audience is once again reminded of her wit, cleverness, and imperative role in such an exchange. Had she been present and not in the act of childbirth, Aaron knows that she would have deciphered the message. Although her next aside is solo, its content continues to highlight her weakness to avenge Titus alone. Her next aside is in the presence of Saturninus who is unaware of her true intentions; it further reveals her deceptive nature and reliance on Aaron: “Why, thus it shall become / High-witted Tamora to gloze with all. / But, Titus, I have touched thee to the quick. / Thy life blood out if Aaron now be wise, /

Then is all safe, the anchor in the port" (4.4.34-38). Tamora does have the intelligence, but her ability to delude everyone stems from Aaron and the last two lines indicate just how important he is to her plan. Unfortunately, it is when she loses him in the next scene that her plans go awry leading Titus to seize control, evident by his last dominating aside of the play.

It is interesting to note that Aaron surrenders to the Goths on behalf of his baby. Thus, a parent's love becomes the reason for each character's rash actions leading to revenge. Once Aaron reveals the truth behind all of his and Tamora's villainy, she is unable to prevail reinforcing Traub's point regarding a "woman's identity [as] subsumed under that of her male protector" (130). Although he has spoken to save his child, his true wickedness is portrayed when Lucius questions if he were sorry for his actions. To this Aaron responds: "Ay, that I had not done a thousand more" (5.1.124). His treacherous motives are relentless and until this point, he had acted solely for evil pleasure. Thus, Aaron is the epitome of the evil villain who adequately supports Charney's assertion of Richard's influence on his character. Without Aaron, Tamora falters. Such can be observed in the costume scene that follows his arrest.

Because revenge is the driving theme of the play, Tamora actually disguises herself while Chiron and Demetrius dress as "Rape" and "Murder," costumes that continue to support the idea that she drives the revenge while the boys symbolically represent the violence she is unable to participate in. Although she feels capable of fooling the recently declared "mad" Titus, he eventually seizes control. However, their final struggle reflects Foucault's idea of resistance between the sexes foreshadowed by asides that precede Titus's final one. Thus, one can now revisit our opening excerpts with an adequate knowledge of the asides influential role. Tamora first states to her sons, "What say you boys, will you abide with him / Whiles I go tell my lord the Emperor / How I have governed our determined jest? / Yield to his humour, smooth and

speak him fair, / And tarry with him till I turn again” (5.2.137-141). Her weakness as a woman and eventual loss of power is further supported by her use of the conversational aside to her sons rather than a solo aside. Such is evident in Titus’s following and last solo aside: “I knew them all, though they supposed me mad, / And will o’rreach them in their own devices - / A pair of cursed hell-hounds and their dam” (5.2.142-144). Much like Margaret’s last aside, this strengthens his final plan to avenge his family successfully. Once Tamora leaves, Titus thinks of the most violent way to kill her sons and to serve them to her at the feast. Though he eventually kills her, Saturninus stabs Titus finally to end the gruesome streak of violence between the two. Although Titus does die, one notes Lucius, an Andronicus, who has the closing lines of the play. As in Richmond’s ascension of the throne, hope is only possible in the male sex. From Lucius’s lines, one notes the restored power within their family as Titus is granted a proper burial; Tamora, on the other hand, will not have a burial. Thus, she is cruelly punished even after death for acting upon the same motives Titus had on behalf of his sons. As such, the last aside ultimately shows that Titus regains power and control through Lucius. It is, after all, his family who further condemns Aaron.

After analyzing the asides as representations of the incremental buildup of power between the sexes, one perceives that the outcomes of both plays are quite complex as the men interestingly prevail over the women in some way. As was already established by Aycock’s closing observation of *Richard III*, Margaret does not get the satisfaction of seeing Richard die. He notes yet another key factor that further undermines Margaret’s power in his having successfully cursed Richard. Aycock notes that without Margaret’s presence “Richard is self-propelled toward his destiny. [Her] presence, then, is an added insurance ...” (70). Thus, regardless of whether or not she had been included in the play’s action, the same outcome would

have been unavoidable. In fact, Slotkin's assertion further supports this idea: "Even when the play destroys Richard, it makes no serious attempt to repress or refute the sinister poetics that make Richard such a powerful figure in the first place, allowing them to persist beyond his death" (26). From such a comment, Margaret's ability to attain a rightful power from her last aside is simply impossible, and the outcome clearly stems from her sex. Therefore based on Slotkin's observation, Richard's power exceeds Margaret's even after his death.

However, unlike Margaret, Titus rightfully attains the authority from his last aside. In fact, Willis's statement further empowers the male sex when stating that "to an extent, Titus's revenge can be said to be more just than Tamora's, in that Titus primarily targets the individuals responsible for the crimes against his family..." (50). Therefore, in the end, should one have pity for the woman who sought to take revenge against a man for the very same reasons he had initiated vengeance upon her, this quote immediately disregards that emotion. Unfortunately, because of "her apparent complicity with the devil [Aaron]" (Green 322), Tamora fails to capture the pity of the audience which ultimately supports the unstoppable patriarchy. Willis notes the many critics who see that "Tamora is built primarily out of patriarchal stereotypes, becoming, for misogynist reasons, increasingly demonized as the main villain of the play once she turns against Titus and his family" (36). Based on such observations from both plays, one may assert that the women have no place in successfully overcoming men in the power struggles existing between the sexes as made evident by a critical study of the aside's presence.

In addition to this conclusion, Sytan's factors in support of the soliloquy are successfully applicable to the aside as it has adequately illuminated character development, theme, and audience. The convention highlights the villainy that exists between the major characters who in turn manipulate the minor characters for revenge. Such a focus on this theme then reinforces

Willis's following comment: "...Shakespeare's revenge plays frequently put the audience in the middle, producing divided loyalties and shifting, ambivalent identifications, while bringing out the resemblance between opposing sides in feuds and factional violence" (24). Thus, the aside has clearly contributed to such an imperative point to demonstrate the shift between the "opposing sides" first evident in the history of *Richard III* with Margaret and Richard and then again in the tragedy of *Titus Andronicus* with Tamora and Titus. Willis then clearly supports Styan's idea as the asides are used "for the audience in relation to the progress of the action" (166). Each time Margaret, Richard, Titus, or Tamora use an aside, the audience gains the ability to trace their progress towards revenge thereby proving the beneficial qualities of this "most pervasive" literary strategy (Lopez 56). At the close of Howard's article, he discusses the purpose of using the aside "to make his plays speak more compellingly to the theatre audience. It is to guide our perceptions and to stimulate our engagement"... [but most important to note is how the asides make] "the experience of his dramas so compelling and, at times, so painful" (357). Such is righteously so as the analysis of the aside in these two plays ultimately suggest one painful notion: woman's subservience to man. What better way to represent the way women are cast aside than by the "aside."

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