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Barbara Burgess-Van Aken

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Introduction

- 1 London, 1678. Long-festering fears reach frenzied proportions when news breaks of a plot to assassinate King Charles II, backed by Rome and the King of France—news that pamphleteers quickly dub “The Horrid Popish Plot.” Against the backdrop of the Exclusion Crisis (the term historians now use to describe the movement to prevent the Catholic Duke of York, from succeeding his brother on the throne) that had begun four years earlier, the plot’s discovery is so disturbing that 200,000 Londoners gather to burn the pope in effigy in 1679.¹ Fear of Jesuit terrorists is nothing new these days. The phobia had begun to foment in the sixteenth century and had escalated after the discovery of the 1605 Gunpowder Plot. Now, in the wake of the Civil War, the beheading of King Charles I, and the Interregnum, fears have escalated. The Popish Plot sets all this tinder on fire.
- 2 The investigation of the Plot sends scores of suspected co-conspirators to the Tower and some to their deaths before proof emerges in 1683 that the plot is nothing more than fake news. Amid this climate of fear, political factions work to promote their agendas. Since the restoration of Charles II to the throne, tensions between the monarchy and Parliament have been constant. Charles has tried to promote religious tolerance, but meets resistance from all factions. Part of the strategy of the parliamentary interest groups is to conflate Catholicism with tyrannical absolutism to promote public distrust of having Catholics involved in government. Consequently, whiggish factions² among the House of Commons have been able to pass laws like the Test Act of 1673 that exclude non-Anglicans from holding national office, forcing Charles II’s Catholic brother to resign his post in the Admiralty.

- 3 Despite the factions, as of 1678 political stances are anything but binary; the ideologies that would eventually result in Tory vs. Whig affiliations are only loosely articulated. The House of Commons' priority is to rein in the power of the king and to prevent Catholics from holding positions of authority. Meanwhile Royalists, many of whom have no love of Catholics, prioritize the preservation of the monarchy's power—even if it means religious tolerance—and therefore support Charles and the succession of his brother to the throne. Regardless of one's politics, everyone fears another civil war and tends to distrust the Other. The result is a rhetoric that justifies hate-mongering and promotes an irrational fear of foreigners, who are often suspected of being Jesuit terrorists. In 1678, the vehicles of this political discourse are pamphlet wars and, of course, the London stage.

The Text: Shakespeare vs. Ravenscroft

- 4 Enter Edward Ravenscroft (c.1654-1707), a not very original playwright who, was a descendent of an ancient Flintshire family and an ardent Royalist.³ He wrote twelve plays between 1671 and 1697, the majority being adaptations of French and Spanish farces. According to the paratext of its 1687 publication, *Titus Andronicus, Or the Rape of Lavinia*, was first staged in 1678. It was Ravenscroft's only Shakespeare adaptation, and his first tragedy, a genre he did not attempt again for twenty years.
- 5 Of course, Ravenscroft was not the only dramatist to adapt Shakespeare. Of the 54 new plays produced between 1678 and 1682 (the height of the Exclusion Crisis), 10 were re-workings of Shakespeare's tragedies,⁴ constituting what Hazelton Spencer termed "an epidemic of alteration."⁵ Almost all of them, as Jean Marsden has pointed out, deal "directly or indirectly with the problem of factions and rebellions."⁶ Ravenscroft's adaptation of *Titus* is no exception. What distinguishes his play, however, is the opportunity it affords us to examine a shift in the fears that play addresses between its original production and its publication nine years later.⁷
- 6 In the 1687 publication of *Titus Andronicus, Or the Rape of Lavinia* Ravenscroft describes his rationale for the first writing and staging of the play "at the beginning of the pretended Popish Plot" in 1678. If we take the playwright's claim at face value, as critics have done over the years, we can conduct a comparative analysis between the play's text and paratext to examine how each reflects fears about the political climate in which it was written. In doing so, I argue that Ravenscroft's intended message has shifted from warning audiences about the dangers of reacting to the Plot with irrational fear to an attempt to quell the fears of those who still object to having a Catholic king. In this sense, he has changed his emphasis from expressing his own fear about his nation to assuaging the fears of others. To explore the trajectory of evidence for Ravenscroft's morphing message we need to consider the political relevance of the original play's themes to the trepidations of Restoration audiences, the symbolic effect of the heightened sense of horror in the adapted play-text, and the didactic Royalist message in the 1687 publication's paratext. Embedded in all these elements is a complicated mesh of fears that reflects a collective state of mind that has an uncanny resonance with today's global political climate, particularly in regard to fears of foreigners.
- 7 As a play about the tragic results of poor political choices, *Titus Andronicus* was an apt choice to promote Ravenscroft's Royalist agenda. First published in 1594, Shakespeare's

Titus is more than a Senecan revenge tragedy set in ancient Rome; in chronicling the challenges to a long-revered family line, *Titus* is also a play that illustrates the horrific consequences of misplaced loyalty and irrational fear with the use of intense violence. In fact, Clark Hulse calculated that by the final curtain, the audience has seen “14 killings, 9 of them on stage, 6 severed members, 1 rape..., 1 live burial, 1 case of insanity and 1 of cannibalism—an average of 5.2 atrocities per act, or one for every 97 lines.”⁸

- 8 Gory as the play is, Liberty Stavanage and Paul Hehmeyer note that *Titus*'s reception has had recurring cycles of popularity over the centuries, claiming that horror is the key to its theatrical success primarily because that is what moves audiences.⁹ Similarly, Allard and Martin, citing Sir Philip's Sidney's claim that “tragedy's scenes of suffering act with ethical force upon even the most hardened consciences,” examine the instructional value of trauma on the stage, considering how pain and “bodily spectacles” can both promote and “hamper national and political identities.”¹⁰ Even without alteration, then, Shakespeare's blood-soaked plot is a useful vehicle for political allegory in the Restoration context. Indeed, it is easy to interpret the Andronici as representing the loyal Royalists who want to preserve the monarchy and aristocracy, Queen Tamora and her rapist sons Chiron and Demetrius as representing the whig factions in the House of Commons, and Aaron the black man as representing a foreign (and Jesuit) threat to the nation's political stability.
- 9 I am inclined to agree with Susan J. Owen, however, who cautions against such tidy allegories and encourages us to consider recurring themes and tropes that reflect the collective and pre-existing political anxieties of *all* factions. Speaking of the 1678-1679 theatrical season, Owen notes that although many Restoration plays had political subtext, “few [playwrights] yet envisaged solutions in terms of taking sides” on either the Exclusion debate or on the Popish Plot investigation.¹¹ At the same time that she would acknowledge Ravenscroft's Royalist leanings, Owen would also urge us to resist polarizing our interpretation of his *Titus*. Similarly, the earlier critic Richard Ashcraft points out that Exclusion Crisis literature is “better understood at the discursive level, since it is the cultural vocabulary itself, rather than party affiliation, that conveys the stress brought to bear on the ideological underpinnings of the crown.”¹² My close reading of Ravenscroft's adaptation of Shakespeare's *Titus* accepts Owen's and Ashcraft's caveats and illustrates the tangled web of tropes and themes that Restoration audiences would have viewed as a nation struggling to articulate its fears and political affiliations. To illustrate this complexity, I have identified three themes and related tropes commonly found in Exclusion Crisis plays that work well for Ravenscroft and would have resonated with Restoration audiences even *before* he makes any alterations to Shakespeare's text: loyalty as it relates to the actions of Titus; chaos as it relates to the characterization of Aaron;¹³ and rape as it relates to Lavinia's plight.
- 10 Loyalty is a theme that Exclusionist playwrights of all factions draw upon, even if they don't all define the term the same way. For those who fear a powerful monarchy, loyalty to the state supersedes fidelity to the throne. They fear that a king who relies upon a popish court will result in divided loyalty between church and state.¹⁴ As evidence they point to Charles II's lack of commitment to rooting out popery,¹⁵ claiming that Charles has been too lenient with Catholics ever since 1660, even allowing some of them in his Privy Council. By contrast, loyalty for Royalists means a stoic non-resistance to the monarch, justified by the conviction that wrong political decisions are

slippery slopes that will lead to chaos.¹⁶ Regardless of one's political leanings, Owen points out, "loyalty in the drama is seldom characterized by glad submission and is more likely to be productive of pain than pleasure,"¹⁷ which is true in *Titus*, even before Ravenscroft makes any changes.

- 11 In both Shakespeare's and Ravenscroft's versions, the play begins with Titus, a warrior and head of a long noble family, acting out of blind loyalty to the new emperor, Saturninus. When the patriarch's sons defy Saturninus' orders to seize his brother Bassianus for running off with Titus' daughter Lavinia, Titus disowns his sons rather than appear disloyal to the head of state. It is only after his sons are framed for murder and his daughter is raped that Titus abandons his loyalty to the emperor, an act that results in the very chaos that Royalists fear. In the end, the message is that Titus' mistake is misplaced fidelity. His wrong decision and unrewarded loyalty make Titus a flawed hero (a common trope related to the theme of loyalty) and lead to a dark ending that implies a murky future for the nation (which is also typical in Restoration plays).¹⁸ More specifically, in *Titus* the fate of the realm remains unclear; although Lucius takes the reins of Rome, the cost of preserving the family line has been a horrendous bloodbath that makes it hard to envision the restoration of order a situation that audiences could identify with in 1678.
- 12 By contrast, the absence of loyalty in a society can lead to chaos, which everyone fears in 1678 but, again, has different meanings for different factions. For the anti-monarchists chaos means tyranny; for the monarchists—rebellion; for the anti-papists—terrorism. Regardless of one's vision of chaos, the audience would see the character of Aron the Moor as the incarnation of their worst fears. His blackness, which Ravenscroft emphasizes in derogatory language even more than Shakespeare does, makes him an Other that Restoration audiences would equate with danger. Given the context of 1678, it would be easy to read Aron as representing the supposed Jesuit perpetrators of the Popish Plot. Indeed, Jennifer Airey's study of the rhetoric of Restoration politics points to frequent propagandizing of Jesuits as "unspiritually obsessed with secular powers and pleasures" as well as "sexually violent and dangerous."¹⁹ But because Ravenscroft's Royalist subtext is more focused on preservation of the monarchy than on Catholics, I read Aron's actions as a vivid portrayal of the consequences of a disrupted political order that any political faction could relate to. Even before Ravenscroft changes the text, Shakespeare's Aaron is destructive—he has an illicit affair with Tamora; he masterminds Lavinia's rape; he frames Titus' sons with the murder of Bassianus; he tricks Titus into severing his own hand; and he kills the nurse of his child by Tamora. Moreover, he does it all without a *soupeçon* of remorse, for chaos has no conscience or loyalty, which is why people fear it.
- 13 Another common trope that evokes disruption of social order is rape. Airey notes that the metaphors of sexual violence and the language of rape that permeate the pamphlet wars in this era aim to justify political stances and to stir the populace to actions such as Pope-burnings.²⁰ Similarly, rape often reflects civil strife in Exclusion Crisis theatre.²¹ By contrast, as Suzanne Gossett notes, actual rape occurs only four times in Elizabethan and Jacobean plays.²² But, as with loyalty, opposing factions interpret rape differently. Whiggish audiences would be likely to view the act on stage as a monstrosity that equates to tyranny. Royalists, however, would be more apt to equate it to rebellion,²³ an interpretation that is rooted in the etymology of the Latin word *rapere*, or "to seize," which is what Royalists see the House of Commons as trying to do with the crown.²⁴

Ravenscroft's revision of Shakespeare's title from *The Lamentable Tragedy of Titus Andronicus* to *Titus Andronicus, Or the Rape of Lavinia* reflects this latter interpretation, according to Kara Reilly, who reads Lavinia's fate as a reference to Britannia and the attempted rape of England (i.e., seizure of the power of the throne) that the Exclusionists are pursuing.²⁵

- 14 The etymology and classical allusion in the name Lavinia, while not Ravenscroft's choice originally, reinforces this connection. As the daughter of King Latinus and the last wife of Aeneas, the historical Lavinia was the mother of the first Romans. Moreover, the word "Latinus" derives from the term *Latinum*, which signifies the periphery of Rome, a territory that would be easily evocative of Britannia for London audiences. As Reilly comments, "With her tongue cut out and her arms lopped off, Lavinia is unable to speak or write in response to violent conspiracy and assault; thus, the pain of Lavinia's body site is a citation of the trauma of the body politic."²⁶ Other critics identify Lavinia as symbolic of Britannia as well. For example, Richard Braverman explains that "[d]ynastic politics are manifest as sexual politics because the quest for a settlement was played out in terms that refigured the body politic as a feminized body."²⁷ In this context, he relates how the search for trust (the lack of which generates fear) between Royalist and parliamentary factions pervades literature of all types between Charles I's execution and the Glorious Revolution. Consequently, audiences would have recognized the political resonance of Lavinia's marriage to Bassianus. As an example, Braverman cites a 1645 tract by Henry Parker, "Jus Regnum. Or, A Vindication of the Regall Power" that applied the principle of coordination between the monarch and Parliament to matrimony.²⁸
- 15 Few of Ravenscroft's other changes to Shakespeare's *Titus* are as significant as the addition of the word "rape" to the title, despite his claim in the Preface to the 1687 edition that he only made the play better, describing Shakespeare's version as "the most incorrect and indigested piece in all his Works" (A2). Technically, Ravenscroft uses 1,300 fewer words and conflates 14 scenes into 7.²⁹ Although he reorders some of the action, the plot remains basically the same. Scholars have analyzed the changes that Ravenscroft made to the original text of *Titus* from various critical perspectives—race, gender, and pain theory being prime examples.³⁰ But they all relate back to the context of the political uncertainties of the era. Focusing on Ravenscroft's Royalist agenda, then, we can analyze three types of changes he made to Shakespeare's text, all of which would resonate with the threat to civil order and the monarchy that the Popish Plot was causing in London embellishments of setting details to glorify a revered family line, characterization emphases, and alterations of plot.
- 16 A striking augmentation of several stage directions serves to further glorify the Andronici. In Act 1, Titus returns from war against the Goths with his sons who bear the armor of their slain brothers to the family crypt. By adding the stage direction "Warlike Musick all the while Sounding" (3),³¹ Ravenscroft lends a ceremonial flourish to the scene. Later, in Act 4 another procession of sorts occurs when Titus, having severed his hand in a vain attempt to spare two of his sons' lives and having vowed revenge on Tamora and her sons, leaves the stage with his family to escort Lucius to his banishment. Notably, instead of Lavinia carrying the severed hand between her teeth, as occurs in Shakespeare's version, Ravenscroft delegates the task to Titus's grandson, Young Junius, the presumable future patriarch of the family: "And Junius too, share in this Ceremony, / Bring thou that hand—and help thy handless Aunt" (38). In 1678, the

severed hand would no doubt evoke memories of Charles I's beheading. Although there are actual beheadings elsewhere in the play, the ceremonious procession in which Titus's heir bears the hand and helps the debilitated Lavinia (symbol of the nation) evokes the restoration of the monarchy. Collectively, these references to their heritage glorify the Andronici's long line of leadership, which Restoration audiences might interpret as an endorsement of the divine right of kings.

- 17 One other notable change to stage directions is the location of the rape scene. In light of Reilly's interpretation of Lavinia representing Britannia, it becomes significant that Ravenscroft shifts the site of the rape from the woods to the garden of the royal palace. Being the seat of an oppositional political faction that that has been invaded by Goths, Royalist audiences might interpret the site as representing the parliamentary factions that threaten the traditional order. Significantly, Saturninus is sleeping, an absence that suggests his neglect of the nation. As Liberty Stavanage aptly observes, "Lavinia is raped at court in the same way the Royalists perceived the sanctity of the Divine Right of Kings being brutally violated through the Popish Plot."³² Stavanage goes on to note that, Lavinia's loss of speech following the rape is equally suggestive: "Confined to her suffering body, Lavinia's silent pain transforms her into a symbol of life in Rome under a tyrant, for Lavinia is referred to as 'Rome's royal mistress'."³³
- 18 A second category of changes that Ravenscroft makes to the play concerns characterizations, specifically to those of Titus, Young Junius, and Aron the Moor. In the Senecan tradition where personal tragedies often trigger temporary insanity, Shakespeare's Titus responds to grief with madness as he distractedly shoots arrows with messages to the gods (4.4). In Ravenscroft's version, however, Titus shoots the messages more purposefully so that the citizens of Rome will receive them, which stirs civil discontent. When Saturninus learns of Titus' disruptive archery, he rants: "Was ever known, / An Emperour in Rome thus us'd?" and complains "Fine Scrowls to fly about the Streets of Rome; / What's this but Libelling against the Senate? / As who wou'd say, in Rome no Justice were" (41). Similarly, instead of losing his mind when he learns that even after severing his own hand to save his sons Saturninus has executed them, Titus sharpens his resolve, and significantly it is he, not his brother Marcus, who identifies Lavinia's rapists, thus giving his vengeance a focus.³⁴ Although Tamora assumes Titus is mad when he offers Young Junius as a hostage to Saturninus, we soon learn the grandson is a deliberate accomplice in Titus's plan of revenge, a logical change in a Royalist context; if the Andronici serve as a trope for the legitimacy of the British monarchy, Ravenscroft had no choice but to portray Titus as sane.
- 19 Although a minor character, the changes that Ravenscroft makes to Titus's grandson also underscore the playwright's Royalist agenda. More than simply changing his name from Lucius to Young Junius, the author develops this character from a fearful child who flees the sight of his armless aunt (Act 4, scene 1) to a young man who bravely helps bear responsibility for the preservation of his family line. I have already alluded to the symbolic gesture of Young Junius carrying Titus's hand in a family procession, but in Act 5, scene 1 Titus's heir becomes essential to the vengeance plot. Giving the boy to Tamora's sons as a hostage while waiting for Lucius to arrive to negotiate with Saturninus, Titus speaks to his grandson cryptically, signaling that a plan is in place. After Titus reminds him of all the wrongs that the family has endured, Junius weeps but also reassures Titus that he can count upon him:

TITUS. Now my little Lad, remember thy Lesson:
And wherefore I brought thee hither.

JUNIUS. I do Grandfather.
 TITUS. Remember thy wrong'd Aunt Lavinia.
 JUNIUS. Yes, and my Banished Father, and my two dead Uncles,
 And you Grandfather, that have but one hand. [*Weeps.*]
 TITUS. That's my good Boy,
 Forbear thy tears, his Passion makes me weep.
 JUNIUS. You and my Uncle Marcus made me Swear,
 And do you think Grandfather I will be forsworn?
 (47)

We soon learn that by promising to lead them to gold, Young Junius cunningly delivers Chiron and Demetrius to Titus, who beheads them and uses their hearts, tongues, and blood to prepare a banquet for their mother Tamora. By playing this instrumental role in the plot, Young Junius demonstrates the rationality and fearlessness of Rome's future leader.

- 20 Aron the Moor, whom I have already identified as a personification of chaos, is the third characterization that differs significantly from Shakespeare's version. Aron's actions do not change much, but Ravenscroft heightens the fearsomeness of the threat that the Moor poses to society, regardless of one's political alliances. For example, although Aron raises havoc with Titus' family, he also plays on the fears of Saturninus by reminding him that there is danger of civil unrest if he disrupts the Andronici. Specifically, in Act 2, scene 1 he counsels the new emperor to be lenient with Titus:

(You know he has a plausible pretence,
 He kill'd his Son, by him the Traytor fell)
 And so supplant you for ingratitude,
 Which Rome reputes to be a heinous Crime. (13)

In Shakespeare's version, Tamora speaks these lines. By giving them to Aron, Ravenscroft reminds Restoration audiences that chaos preys upon *everyone's* fears, regardless of their political leanings.

- 21 Similarly, chaos undermines loyalty, a point that Ravenscroft highlights by changing the nature of Aron's relationship with Tamora. Compared to Shakespeare's Aaron, Ravenscroft's villain does not reciprocate Tamora's lust; his liaison with her is strictly opportunistic, a point he makes bluntly in Act 3, scene 1 when Tamora approaches Aron amorously, suggesting that since they are alone, "Under this Shade, my Aron, let's sit down, / In full possession of all these delights." Uninterested, Aron flatly rejects her, saying "Madam, tho' Venus Govern your desire, / Saturne is Dominator over mine" (19).
- 22 The author further emphasizes Aron's contribution to the disruption of the social order not only by moving horrors that occur off-stage in Shakespeare's play into audience view, but also by adding to them in the closing scene. Shakespeare's Aaron confesses his crimes much earlier—in Act 4, scene 2—when a nurse appears with Aaron's child. Ravenscroft, however, saves Aron's confession until the banquet scene in Act 5, where he unleashes the Moor's chaotic nature in full force. In Shakespeare's final scene, Aaron makes a brief appearance, and speaks few lines before Lucius orders his live burial (5.3). By contrast, Ravenscroft's Aron plays a much larger and more dramatic role in the conclusion where the audience witnesses the torturing of Aron on a rack while Titus extracts his confession. Even in agony, Aron revels in reciting the litany of his atrocities. In his one significant change that involves Tamora, Ravenscroft shows her killing the black infant she bore by Aron. But not to be outdone in perverseness, Aron utters, "Give it me—I'll eat it" (55). While Exclusion Crisis plays often conclude with "societal disintegration,"³⁵ Airey notes that Ravenscroft's play uses the act of

cannibalism to reestablish appropriate societal boundaries, eliminating “social toxins via ingestion” and neutralizing the threat of the Goths “as Tamora and Aron literally consume their children out of existence,” adding that “[t]he cannibal father becomes, perversely, a symbol of renewed cultural stability, reflecting Ravenscroft’s persistent loyalty to the Stuart line.”³⁶ Nevertheless, the stability of Rome still seems fragile as Lucius and his son take the reins of the realm, and in 1678 audiences would have had little trouble drawing a parallel between the assault on the Andronici and the Popish Plot’s threat to the monarchy. Moreover, Ravenscroft’s decision to send Aron, the fomentor of fear, up in flames as the curtain drops is a fitting reversal of the public’s response to the Plot—Pope-burnings.

Paratext and Context

- 23 By 1687, the political landscape of London has changed. Pope-burnings subsided, and the Popish Plot collapsed, but not before several members of Charles II’s court went to the Tower. In the end 35 people were executed for supposed complicity in what turned out to be a mere hoax perpetrated by Titus Oates.³⁷ Meanwhile, other crises fueled the fears of the British people, including the thwarted Rye House Plot in 1683 (another plan to assassinate Charles II) and the Monmouth Rebellion in 1685 (a failed attempt by Charles’ illegitimate son to usurp the throne). In that same year, the Whigs’ worst fear was realized—the coronation of a Catholic King. By 1687, the Exclusion Crisis was over.
- 24 Meanwhile, on the London stage, the pendulum swung between pro- and anti-Royalist sentiment. After 1678, polarization between Royalists and formative factions of the Whig Party sharpened as Parliament went on the offensive in 1680 to try to pass the Exclusion Bill, which would have limited the powers of the monarch and prevented any Catholic from taking the throne. In response, a wave of pro-Royalist plays propagandized against the bill only to be superseded by a wave of Whig plays as support for the legislation gained traction.³⁸ Owen even notes that several Royalists, including Ravenscroft, went underground until 1688, adding that “It is as if the voice of loyal playwrights dutifully stifles itself just as their loyal heroes absorb outrage and transform pain to self-annihilation. Tory quietism leads paradoxically, but logically given the contradictions involved, to silence.”³⁹
- 25 Owen is not entirely accurate, however. Ravenscroft actually maintained a presence on the London stage. In 1681 his farce, *The London Cuckolds*, was produced and performed annually thereafter on the lord mayor’s day until 1752.⁴⁰ While that play’s text and paratext are ostensibly apolitical, his 1683 production of the comedy *Dame Dobson* included an epilogue with a rather scathing attack on Whigs. Finally, as noted earlier, he may also have staged a revival of his *Titus* prior to the publication of the play in 1687. All this activity suggests that Ravenscroft was not as fearful of reprisals for his productions as some of his Royalist contemporaries, a stance he reinforces with a dose of self-righteousness and didacticism in the paratext of the 1687 edition.
- 26 That edition begins with a dedication, “To the Right Honourable The Lord Arundel [sic].” Arundell was a devoted Catholic who, charged with conspiracy in the Popish Plot, spent years in the Tower, narrowly escaping execution. A year after exoneration in 1685, he was appointed to James’ Privy Council.⁴¹ In seeking the Lord’s favor, Ravenscroft signals his support of James II’s succession to the throne, stating that if

someone as great as James II made Arundell a trusted advisor, then surely the Lord must be great as well:

Needless it is then for me to recount those Virtues that Ennoble you, since the Judgment of a Prince that calls you to his Councils, & service in the Management of the great affairs of State, so amply declare and Confirm 'em to the World: for his Royal Favours are not unwarily or loosely bestow'd, but like his Seal leave an Impression, and give the Stamp of Greatness. (A2v)

Aside from flattering Arundell, the author implies that Britain should celebrate James' succession, a point he amplifies by citing the king's sterling qualities and affirming the Divine Right of Kings when he states that James' "personal Virtues render him Great, not only by Nature Endow'd, but by Experience taught; a Prince whose Life from his Cradle to his Coronation, was spent in the School of Virtue; and every Action, whilst a Subject, was a Noble Lesson for succeeding Princes to Learn and imitate..." (A2v). He adds that the king's coronation was indeed just and, in turn, James himself has administered justice by calling men such as Arundell for "whome the fire of Persecution, and Imprisonment had Try'd" into his service (A2r). In 1687 the connection between the injustices that Arundell and Titus endured would be obvious.

- 27 But the paratext also reflects a shift from the Ravenscroft's intent in writing the play message and the message he sends by publishing it, a shift that becomes evident by comparing how the author describes the past and the present in the Dedication. Speaking of the present, the author praises Arundell and the king, thereby endorsing Divine Right and honoring Arundell as a deserving member of James' Privy Council. In this sense he expresses no fear; rather, he offers comfort to readers who may be afraid of a Catholic king. No longer needing to warn audiences about the danger of believing the Popish Plot, the most important message of the play when applying it to the present is one of reassurance: the Andronici survive and justice prevails.
- 28 But by Ravenscroft's own admission, reassurance was not his purpose in writing the play. When he talks about the past, he recounts that he wrote *Titus* at a time when factions exploited the fear generated by the Popish Plot and threatened the monarchy. Back in the present, he claims victory for himself as well, stating that not only was he among those that knew the Popish Plot was fabricated but that the play's purpose in the past was to expose "Base and Ignoble deeds," and to "divert and deter the ungenerous from their practices" (A2v). Referring specifically to the Popish Plot, he adds that his play "was Calculated to the Season, when Villany and Treachery and Perjury, Triumph'd over Truth, Innocence and Loyalty" (4r). In other words, he wrote the play to warn London audiences how irrational fear makes one vulnerable to deception and plotting—something he knew all along.
- 29 Ravenscroft is similarly braggadocious in his address "To the Reader," stating that he risked losing money on the production out of a commitment to exposing the truth:
[...] at the beginning of the pretended Popish Plot, when neither Wit nor Honesty had Encouragement: Nor cou'd this expect favour since it shew'd the Treachery of Villains, and the Mischiefs carry'd on by Perjury and False Evidence; and how Rogues may frame a Plot that shall deceive and destroy both the Honest and the Wise; which were the reasons why I did forward it at so unlucky a conjuncture, being content rather to lose the Profit, then not expose to the World the picture of such Knaves and Rascals as then Reign'd in the opinion of the Foolish and Malicious part of the Nation: but it bore up against the Faction, and is confirm'd a Stock-Play. (A2v)

Although Marsden assumes that Ravenscroft's assertion that he was content to lose money was probably disingenuous and suggests that the play probably was profitable because of its parallels with the events related to the Plot,⁴² there is no evidence that *Titus* ever became a "Stock-Play." Regardless, the author's description of the 1678 political climate underscores that he was addressing his own concern about how the Plot was stirring irrational fears that threatened the monarchy by adapting a play in which the protagonist's fatal error of misplaced loyalty results in an uncertain future for the nation.

- 30 While the shift in emphasis about the significance of the play's plot is relatively consistent in the dedication and address to the reader, the inclusion of three different prologues and an epilogue that were not even written for his adaptation of *Titus* is puzzling. Explaining that "[i]n the Hurry of those distracted times" these pieces "were lost" (A3), Ravenscroft says that in order to give readers their money's worth, he has "furnished" the reader with substitutes that he wrote for others' work "proportion'd to that Mad Season", although he is not explicit about which plays he is referring to or their dates. In the first substituted prologue, the playwright calls for calm and exhorts the "men of Bus'ness in the Nation" to "leave Faction, Jealousies, and Fears" behind and to "learn all due Allegiance to the King" (A3), a message that serves Ravenscroft's purposes in the *Titus* edition. However, in the substituted epilogue, Ravenscroft distances himself from politics, telling the audience that even though they came "Swell'd Big with Expectation [...] to see us Act our great Affairs at home" with "Papists accus'd and Satyrs against Rome," his play "forbears to represent the Present Age" (A3). In fact, he claims to have tricked the audience, saying that story of the play "was no Popish-Plot" (A3v). This statement raises questions. Was the contradiction in the epilogue with the rest of the paratext something that Ravenscroft merely overlooked? Or, are readers supposed to apply the disclaimers that the play is not political to *Titus*? If so, the epilogue contradicts the politicized message in the dedication and reader address.
- 31 This contradiction becomes even more puzzling in light of Genest's report that Ravenscroft's contemporary, Gerard Langbaine, author of the 1691 *Account of the English Dramatick Poets*, claimed that he had copies of the original prologue and epilogue (probably from having attended a production in 1678), which he offered to Ravenscroft, presumably prior to the publication of *Titus*. While we don't know why the playwright passed up Langbaine's offer, the failure to do so suggests the possibility that the "apolitical" assertion in the substituted epilogue is disingenuous and that there may have been content in the originals that the author did not want to come to light again. Regardless, the paratext written expressly for the 1687 edition suggests that what Ravenscroft wanted to achieve when staging the play at the outbreak of the Popish Plot differed from what he was aiming to accomplish with its publication nine years later, and that both goals are directed at London's political anxieties at the time.
- 32 Finally, what Ravenscroft does not say in the paratext reinforces his shift in emphasis. Specifically, he gives no indication that he has revised the play in any way between 1678 and 1687. Closing the reader address with the justification: "it is the business of the Stage, as well as Pulpits, to declaim and Instruct," he adds "[t]hat was my design when I Writ, and now Print'em" (A2), making no mention of having edited the play itself. In contrast to the changing political contexts that the paratext illuminates, the stasis of the text itself highlights the value of a close reading of the 1687 edition of

Titus; the contrasting political references of the 1678 performance and the 1687 edition is a useful example of how context could re-inflect the text to serve political discourse on the Restoration stage.

Conclusion

- 33 For all the questions about the author's intentions that the adapted *Titus* raises, we can conclude for certain that the confidence Ravenscroft expressed about James II's leadership in the 1687 edition was ill-founded. A year after the publication of *Titus Andronicus, Or the Rape of Lavinia*, the Glorious Revolution brought the Protestant William and Mary to the throne as James negotiated his exile to France. Even after its publication, there were no more productions of the play in London until 1704.⁴³ But today, as we deal with a resurgence of nationalist movements that tolerate the demonization of the Other, the fears that *Titus* addresses are all too familiar. If Stavanage is right that interest in *Titus* goes in cycles, perhaps we are due for a new adaptation of the play. For if Ravenscroft's adaptation has shown us anything, it is that when it comes to portraying irrational fear of the Other, Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* will always be relevant theatre.

NOTES

1. Sheila Williams, "The Pope-Burning Processions of 1679, 1680 and 1681", *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 1958, vol.21, no. 1/2, p.1679.
2. Although the Whigs did not become an official political party until 1689, the term "whig" began to gain currency in 1679 as a reference to a person with pro-exclusionist sentiments, which is the sense in which the term will be used in this article (see *Oxford English Dictionary* online, s.v. "whig").
3. Louis A. Knafla, "Ravenscroft, Edward (fl. 1659-1697)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/23171>, accessed 23 August 2017], doi: 10.1093/ref:odnb/23171.
4. In addition to Ravenscroft's *Titus Andronicus, Or the Rape of Lavinia* (1678): John Dryden, *Troilus and Cressida* (1678) and *All for Love [Antony and Cleopatra]*; Thomas Otway's *The Rise and Fall of Caius Marius [Romeo and Juliet]* (1680); John Crowne's *The Misery of Civil War [Henry VI, Part II]* (1679) and *Henry VI, the First Part* (1681); Nahum Tate's *Richard II* (1680-81), *The History of King Lear* (1681); and *The Ingratitude of a Commonwealth [Coriolanus]* (1681); and Thomas D'Urfey's *The Injur'd Princess [Cymbeline]* (1682).
5. Spencer Hazelton, *Shakespeare Improved: The Restoration Versions in Quarto and on the Stage*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1927, p. 96.
6. Jean Marsden, *The Re-Imagined Text: Shakespeare, Adaptation, and Eighteenth-Century Literary Theory*, Lexington, KY, University of Kentucky Press, 1995, p. 41.
7. John Genest, *Some Account of the English Stage from the Restoration in 1660 to 1830*, vol. 1, New York, Burt Franklin Research and Work Series 93 (originally published in Bath, 1822), p. 230, 347. Genest indicates that the actual date of the first production is speculative since the only evidence

we have is self-reported by Ravenscroft in the paratext of the 1687 publication. Genest does list a 1682 production of *Titus Andronicus* in a list of 21 "old plays" that were revived, which allows us to assume that the production was Shakespeare's play, not Ravenscroft's. See also Van Lennep, William, Ed., *The London Stage, 1660-1800*, vol. 1, Carbondale, IL, Southern Illinois University Press, 1965, p. 352, who suggests that the adapted *Titus* may have been revived in either the 1685-1686 or 1686-1687 season.

8. Clark Hulse, "Wresting the Alphabet: Oratory and Action in *Titus Andronicus*", *Criticism*, 21.2, 1979, 106-118, p. 106.

9. Liberty Stavanage and Paxton Heymeyer, eds, *Titus out of Joint: Reading the Fragmented Titus Andronicus*, Newcastle upon Tyne, Cambridge Scholars, 2012, p. 3.

10. Sir Philip Sidney, *The Defense of Poesy*, ed. Katherin Duncan-Jones, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1989, p. 45.

11. Susan J. Owen, "Interpreting the Politics of Restoration Drama", *The Seventeenth Century*, 8.1, 1993, 67-97, p. 71.

12. Quoted in Richard Braverman, *Plots and Counterplots: Sexual Politics and the Body Politic in English Literature, 1660-1730*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1993, p. 156.

13. Shakespeare spells the Moor's name "Aaron;" Ravenscroft spells it "Aron".

14. Owen, "Interpreting", *op. cit.*, p. 79.

15. John Kenyon, *Stuart England*, New York, St. Martin's Press, 1978, p. 119, 121.

16. Owen, "Interpreting", *op. cit.*, p. 82.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 89.

18. Owen, "Interpreting", *op. cit.* Owen doesn't apply these tropes specifically to Ravenscroft's *Titus*. But her application of them to other plays such as Otway's *Venice Preserv'd* (1682) and Lee's *The Massacre of Paris* (1679), both Royalist plays, is analogous.

19. Jennifer L Airey, *The Politics of Rape: Sexual Atrocity, Propaganda Wars, and the Restoration Stage*, Newark, University of Delaware Press, 2012, p. 2.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 5.

21. Owen, "Interpreting", *op. cit.*, p. 84.

22. Suzanne Gossett, "But men Are Molded out of Faults': Marrying the Rapist in Jacobean Drama", *English Literary Drama*, vol.14, no.3, 1984, p. 305.

23. Owen, *Restoration Theatre*, *op. cit.*, p. 174.

24. Reilly, *op. cit.*, p. 141.

25. *Ibid.*

26. *Ibid.*

27. Braverman, *op. cit.*, p. xii-xiii.

28. *Ibid.*, p. 31.

29. Stavanage, *op. cit.*, p. 142.

30. See James Allard and Mathew Martin's *Staging Pain, 1580-1800: Violence and Trauma in British Theater*, which discusses the play in terms of pain theory or Liberty Stavanage's feminist reading, "From *Titus* to *Titus*: Edward Ravenscroft's *Titus Andronicus* and the Emasculation of Shakespeare's Tamora," in Stavanage and Heymeyer, *op. cit.* p. 141-161. Stavanage argues that Ravenscroft gendered Tamora by disempowering her.

31. All references to Ravenscroft's text come from a facsimile of *Titus Andronicus, Or the Rape of Lavinia. Acted at the Theatre Royall, A Tragedy, Alter'd from Mr. Shakespeares Work*, London, Cornmarket Press, 1687. From the copy in the Birmingham Shakespeare Library, 1969.

32. Stavanage, *op. cit.*, 142.

33. *Ibid.*, p. 143.

34. Owen, *Restoration Theatre. op. cit.*, p. 158.

35. Airey, *op. cit.*, p. 24. For example, Airey points to Lee's *Lucius Brutus* (1680) and Mithridates, King of Pontus (1678), as well as Thomas Otway's *Venice Preserv'd* (1682), and John Crowne's *Thyestes* (1681).
36. *Ibid.*, p. 174.
37. "Marshall, Alan", "Oates, Titus (1649-1705)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* [<http://oxforddnb.com/view/article/20437>, accessed 27 August 2017], doi: 10.1093/ref/odnb/20437.
38. Owen, "Interpreting," *op. cit.*, p. 86-87.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 92.
40. Knafla, *op. cit.*
41. Peter Sherlock, "Arundell, Henry, third Baron Arundell of Wardour (bap. 1608, d. 1694)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/716>, accessed 7 September 2017], doi: 10.1093/ref/odnb/716.
42. Marsden, *op. cit.*, p. 42.
43. Genest, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 316. Genest, reports that it was also performed at Drury Lane in 1717 and again at Lincoln Inn's Fields in 1720.

ABSTRACTS

Fear of a Catholic on England's throne stirred high social and political anxieties that played out on the Restoration stage during the Exclusion Crisis. This paper explores the provenance of an adaptation of Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* by the Royalist playwright Edward Ravenscroft. Probably first performed in 1678, the play apparently dropped out of sight as the investigation of the Popish Plot led to incarceration and executions. I argue that Ravenscroft heightened the terrifying elements of the play in response to the initial outbreak of the Plot but by the time that the Catholic Duke of York succeeded to the throne as James II, Ravenscroft refocused his message to help quell the public's fears about James II's reign. My analysis explores why Restoration audiences would resonate with the horrors in the play, how changes that Ravenscroft makes to Shakespeare's original text heighten the fear of a civil unrest, and how excerpts from the paratext of the 1687 publication illustrate a shift of emphasis on the fears that Ravenscroft was addressing between 1678 and 1687. Ravenscroft's decision to use *Titus* not only demonstrates Shakespeare's innate understanding of fear but also the Bard's adaptability to a variety of politically charged contexts.

La crainte qu'un Catholique n'accède à la couronne d'Angleterre suscita de fortes angoisses sociales et politiques dont le théâtre de la Restauration se fit l'écho pendant la crise de l'Exclusion Bill. Cet article explore la genèse de l'adaptation de *Titus Andronicus* réalisée par le dramaturge royaliste Edward Ravenscroft. Cette pièce, jouée pour la première fois en 1678, disparut de la scène lors des arrestations et exécutions qui suivirent l'enquête sur le « Complot papiste ». Je démontre que dans sa pièce Ravenscroft a amplifié les éléments générateurs de terreur en réponse à l'annonce du complot, mais qu'il a retiré l'œuvre lorsque l'enquête inquisitoriale s'est intensifiée. À l'avènement de Jacques II, catholique, Ravenscroft estima qu'il pouvait sans danger publier et monter à nouveau sa pièce, ce qu'il fit pour aider à apaiser les craintes du public à l'égard du nouveau régime. Mon analyse explore les raisons pour lesquelles l'horreur présente dans la pièce toucha les spectateurs de la Restauration ; elle montre aussi comment les changements apportés par Ravenscroft au texte de Shakespeare amplifièrent la

peur que la monarchie ne soit ébranlée et comment des extraits du paratexte de l'édition de 1687 illustrent l'évolution de ses propres craintes politiques. La décision de Ravenscroft d'utiliser *Titus* démontre la compréhension que Shakespeare avait de la peur mais également l'adaptabilité de son œuvre à une variété de contextes politiques contestés.

INDEX

Mots-clés: « complot papiste », « Exclusion Bill », Ravenscroft Edward, Titus Andronicus

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AUTHOR

BARBARA BURGESS-VAN AKEN

SAGES Fellow, Case Western Reserve University