Consuming Mother/Nurturing Father—The Art of Cooking in *Titus Andronicus*

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But? How if that fly had a father, brother?
How would he hang his slender gilded wings
And buzz lamenting dirges in the air!?

(*Titus Andronicus, III.2.60-2*)

Whereof their mother daintily hath fed,
Eating the flesh that she herself hath bred
'Tis true, 'tis true; witness my knife's sharp point.

(V.3.59-62)

Then Titus promptly stabs the Empress to break up the banquet. The main purpose of Titus's cannibalistic banquet is a blood revenge in which Titus performs as a cook in order to make Tamora consume her two sons, Demetrius and Chiron, who murdered Titus's sons and raped his daughter. His sons' deaths make Titus perceive that 'Rome is but a wilderness of tigers' (III.1.53), or 'devourers' (56), but the most important aspect of the tragic movement towards the cannibalistic banquet is its reversal of conventional gender roles. Shakespeare associates Tamora's otherness, both in race and gender, with the self-consuming 'wilderness' of nature, which devours its own offspring. The demonised image of Tamora recalls the famous speech by another evil woman, Lady Macbeth:

... I have given suck, and know
How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me.
I would, while it was smiling in my face,
Have plucked my nipple from his boneless gums
And dashed the brains out, had I so sworn
As you have done to—his.

(*Macbeth, I.7.54-9*).

This symbolic death of the nurturing mother recurs in Shakespearean tragedies such as *Titus Andronicus* and *Macbeth*, which stage bloody banquets devised and served up by nurturing men as a way of wreaking vengeance on nature and mother figures.

Noting this kind of symbolic structure helps one to read the text of *Titus Andronicus* in terms of gender. It would be appropriate to let Titus, not the editors, remove the 'mother' by allowing 'he' (III.2.61), the father, to lament the death of his innocent child alone. Admitting the advantage of the emendation by the Oxford editors, the New Arden editor raises the question of whether it is 'not high-handed for editors to erase the mother on the basis of such a large conjecture about the printers' incompetence'. His suggestion is to 'emend to the rhetorically and metrically stronger "a father and a mother"'. What is implied in this emendation is the idea of Titus as a kind of hermaphroditic, or transgendered man, which recalls the invocation of King Lear's inner 'mother' in his 'Hysterica passio' (Q1

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In Act V, Scene 3, when Saturninus tells Titus to bring in Chiron and Demetrius as those who 'ravished her [Lavinia] and cut away her tongue' (56), Titus answers scornfully:

Why, there they are, both baked in this pie,
The function of the two banquets in Macbeth (1.7, III. 7.21-2/F1 II.2.225-6).\textsuperscript{6} Locating this strong feeling 'at the core of tragedy', the editor argues that 'in becoming a mother as well as a father Titus becomes a human being'.\textsuperscript{7}

This brief textual analysis of III.2, a scene absent from the Quartos and initially printed in F1, gives us an insight into what an important role a tiny part of the text plays in the interpretation of the whole play as well as the character of Titus.\textsuperscript{8} Whether to adopt 'a father, brother', 'a father and mother' or 'a father and a mother' does not in fact make as much difference to the reading of the play as one might think. The printer might have thought that 'father and mother' would be 'a more natural combination' than 'father, brother', as the Arden editor says.\textsuperscript{9} What is more important for our purpose is to acknowledge not only the historicity but also the materiality of the text in relation to the cultural and social practices of banqueting. There is a point that has to be made here: this scene constitutes part of an interconnected pair, with the bloody banquet in the final act giving us a clue to the role and meaning of the banquets in the play. This scene, possibly used for a touring performance, includes a clue for understanding the emblematic aspect of the play in relation to banqueting practice.

The two banquet scenes dramatised in Titus Andronicus are a humble family banquet in Act III, Scene 2, and a more public banquet in Act V, Scene 3.\textsuperscript{10} These banquets look similar to the two meals in Macbeth, but one should note that each play foregrounds a different aspect of the term 'banquet'. They are similar in that in both plays the term 'banquet' suggests the modern sense of a stately feast, rather than just a 'light repast'.\textsuperscript{11} They are different in terms of the materiality in which the banqueting practice of everyday life is supposed to be textually embedded. The function of the two banquets in Macbeth (I.7, III. 4) is more symbolic than material, foregrounding the dramatic structure which discloses the vulnerable image of authority in chaos; the weakness of laws of hospitality that construct and support the community and its social order becomes visible in the form of tragedy.\textsuperscript{12} The two banquets in Titus Andronicus, however, demand a more complex approach to the text and context of the play because of the multiple elements constituting essential parts of these scenes—for example, the concepts and practices of diet, cookery, emblem, masque and cannibalism as ingredients of a revengeful banquet. Therefore, we need to understand these banquet scenes in the broader context of early modern culture and social practices.

The first scene (III.2) needs careful examination, for it is an 'additional scene', first printed in the First Folio (1623), but generally considered to have been written in the lost prompt-book for performance.\textsuperscript{13} The vogue of the period for mad scenes would have required this additional scene, although no editor alludes to its relationship to the emergence of another kind of vogue—for the banqueting setting. Apart from the traditional textual controversy over Act III, Scene 2, one needs to take into account the problem of spatial practices and body politics. The point is to see the banquet not only as a dramatic convention but also as part of social and cultural practices in terms of 'playing space'. So far, Shakespearean scholars have not treated this theme of banquets in Titus Andronicus seriously enough from the viewpoints that I have proposed above. This is partly because their concerns are not focussed on the spatial, material, and marginal aspects of banqueting practices represented in the play, but rather on the symbolic structure combining words and actions in the banquet scenes. It would also be fair to say that Titus Andronicus has been regarded as 'a marginal play' in many respects, compared with a major play like Macbeth, and as especially 'concerned in its structure and characterization with marginality and the threat it poses to political identity'.\textsuperscript{14} One needs to look at the materiality of the banquet in order to reconsider the banquet scenes not just as symbolic but as an intersectional arena of the symbolic and the material boundaries between us and them, home and abroad, private and public, and inside and outside, and in terms of gender, race, class and nationality.

It becomes necessary to be aware of the 'dramaturgy of the margins', to borrow Steven Mullaney's phrase, which in the present context means an exploration of the moment when one culture loses its identity in the act of devouring itself.\textsuperscript{15} In other words, this is a dramaturgy which designates an act of encountering the Other at the very margins—in other words, the 'unstructured areas of society'.\textsuperscript{16} Titus Andronicus centres its images of dismemberment on the ritualistic practices of the banquet, which is particularly significant because of its uneasy position in the aesthetics of Elizabethan culture.

Let us now return to the banquet scenes in Titus Andronicus, which indicate the way in which Titus and his family fall into a marginal state very similar to the ambiguous position and indefinable status that Mary Douglas describes by taking two examples: the man who has crossed the social boundary and 'the unborn child'. Talking about the crucial necessity of the 'ritual play on articulate and inarticulate forms' for the understanding of pollution, Douglas first notes 'a double play on inarticulateness': 'First there is a venture into the disordered regions of the mind. Second there is the venture beyond the confines of society. The man who comes back from these inaccessible regions brings with him a power not available to those who have stayed in the control of themselves and of society.'\textsuperscript{17} 'Formlessness' is credited with two types of 'powers', 'dangerous' and 'good'.

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Concerned with ‘beliefs about persons in a marginal state’, the second example that Douglas explores to understand the ‘play on form and formlessness’ in terms of the ‘rituals of society’ is ‘the unborn child’, whose present and future positions are ‘ambiguous’. As ‘no one can say what sex it will have or whether it will survive the hazards of infancy’, ‘the unborn child’ is, Douglas writes, ‘treated as both vulnerable and dangerous’. 

John Gillies suggests that Aaron’s child is ‘a living sign of the pollution of the Roman body-politic’, at least from the perspective of the Roman characters. The child is depicted by the Nurse as the ‘Empress’s shame and stately of the pollution of the Roman body-politic, at least from the vulnerable and dangerous’.

The private and rather stoic nature of the first banquet clearly lies in Titus’s statement as he starts the ritual banquet of vengeance: ‘So, so, now sit, and look you eat no more/ Than will preserve just so much strength in us/ As will revenge these bitter woes of ours’ (III. 2. 1-3). The private and rather stoic nature of the first banquet scene generates a conspicuous contrast with the more public and extravagant banquet of Act V, Scene 3, which ends in bloody cannibalism and murder. The insertion of a quasi-masque scene preceding the final scene suggests the conventional connection between masques and banquets in the tradition of entertainment practised both at court and in the country houses of the Elizabethans. Leaving aside the possibility that it was written for a performance by a touring company, the first banquet scene in Act III, Scene 2 might have been well received by the readers of the First Folio when it was first printed in 1623. The motif of the banquet had already been so popular on the Jacobean stage by the 1620s that editors of F1 had good reason to restore the first banquet scene dropped from the earlier Quartos to attract its readers.

At the end of Act V, Scene 2, Titus declares that he will ‘play a cook’ himself, and eventually he proves to be one of the most typical male Shakespearean characters keen on taking over the role of food-provider in the household. Concerning such nurturing practice as undertaken by men as part of the patriarchal project of taking control of household business, as Ann Christensen claims, it is not difficult to find a similar kind of project in Shakespeare’s plays in various genres: tragedies, comedies, histories, Roman plays and romances. For example, in Romeo and Juliet, Old Capulet insists on preparing the nuptial feast on the eve of his daughter’s marriage: ‘I’ll play the housewife for this once’ (Romeo & Juliet, IV.2.43). Prince Hal and Poins ‘[p]ut on two leathern jerkins and aprons, and wait upon him [Falstaff] at his table like drawers’ in order to catch him in the act of fraud (2H4, II.2.149-50). In The Taming of the Shrew, a magic banquet is snatched away by a harpy under Prospero’s ‘instruction’, before his shipwrecked captives begin to eat (III.3.85). Cardinal Wolsey knows how to manage a great feast perfectly when he has ‘the banquet ready/ I’th’ privy chamber’ (All Is True [Henry VIII], I.4.101-2).

Christensen examines the problem of ‘nurturing men’ on the Shakespearean stage in ‘the context of the shifting location of domestic authority in early modern English society’. Criticising psychoanalytic readings of nurturing which are largely focused on Shakespeare’s relations to the maternal, she asserts that ‘the “politics of feeding” is grounded not only in “the maternal”, but in the domestic sphere itself’. She also points out the problems that feminist critics have with ‘the use of “sentimental stereotypes of the mother as the natural source of nourishment and nurture”’. In order to solve these problems, Christensen
further suggests placing ‘the matrix of gender, nurture, family, and power in the historically specific category of household government’. Her argument is interesting in that she considers nurturing men like Titus as a dramatic signal of a ‘deviation from the cultural norm’ in which ‘both literal and metaphoric forms of nurture are traditionally associated with women’. Shakespeare’s placing of ‘male characters in the nurturing position’, according to Christensen, reflects ‘the ambivalent roles of women and men within the “private” household’. In short, the home is dramatised in Shakespearean plays as a contested space when seen from the viewpoints of ‘gender, nurture, family, and power’. Her effort to problematise the gender relationship in a private space such as the home contributes to the reinterpretation of Titus’s role not only in the genealogy of ‘nurturing men’ of Shakespeare plays, but also in the context of the household economy, for it is this contested space at the margins of the body and culture that I am exploring in terms of banqueting practices.

One needs to note, as Christensen does, the possibility of viewing the actions of nurturing men as part of the patriarchal elimination of women from domestic activities, because ‘in pre industrial England, a crucial if mundane source of women’s social and economic power resided in their capacities to produce, prepare, and provide food for their families’. The question that she raises is, of course, not just the domestic role of the Elizabethan housewife but also the ideology of the household as a site of conflict in terms of gender and class. There is a tendency in Christensen’s argument, however, to generalise the gender and class division in assessing family labour when she asserts that ‘women performed most or all of the work inside their homes’ in Elizabethan England. She compares Titus’s household to that of ‘early modern merchants and noblemen’, but it needs to be discussed more carefully in relation to the concept of the household as a social and cultural space in which feasting and banqueting are practised as part of everyday life.

Two further points need to be made here. First, in discussing the importance of the contributions of Renaissance housewives to their domestic economies, it is necessary to draw a clear distinction between ‘the supervision of servants in noble households’ and ‘the performance of ... duties themselves in houses of the middling sort’. Second, to examine the ideological effect on the theatrical representation of nurturing men in a changing society, it is essential to explore the cultural, social, and, more specifically, culinary context of what nurturing men provide their families with to establish their authority in the household.

One of the questions that arise is to what extent and in what ways the performed world of the Roman noblemen in Titus Andronicus reflects the everyday life of Shakespeare’s England. To answer this question in relation to Titus’s art and practice of banqueting, the critical method that I adopt here is to focus on the everyday aspects of Elizabethan culture and society, as Patricia Fumerton advocates in her ‘Introduction’ to Renaissance Culture and the Everyday. As far as banqueting practices are concerned, the play provides a curious mixture of classical sources and contemporary cultural practices in producing one of the most monstrous spectacles on the Shakespearean stage. This is related to the emblematic aspect that Shakespeare introduced into the play. This aspect was derived from mainly classical writers such as Ovid, creating tremendous theatrical effects through tableaux vivants.

In Shakespeare’s plays, ‘feeding’ and ‘nurture’ function both literally and metaphorically. The two banquet scenes in Titus Andronicus can be seen therefore as an instance of ‘the literal service and consumption of food’, as Christensen writes, whereas the professional nurse and Lavinia can be regarded as ‘the verbal and metaphorical representations of “nurture” in terms of domestic care and comfort’. The question that is raised here is why male characters such as Titus attempt to take over the female role of nurturing when ‘both literal and metaphoric forms of nurture are traditionally associated with women’.

Let us return, then, to Titus’s performance of the role of cook. To take this particular role can be considered as part of his project to usurp the woman’s role of nurturing—especially an act of food-providing. However, if his self-conscious theatricality in his role as cook is shared even by his opponents such as Aaron, is it appropriate to put all of them in the same category of Shakespeare’s nurturing men? Aaron has his own nurturing relationship with his baby son:

I'll make you feed on berries and on roots,
And fat on curds and whey, and suck the goat,
And cabin in a cave, and bring you up
To be a warrior and command a camp.

This question requires another way of looking at the representation of nurturing in Elizabethan England. One should not overlook, for example, the culinary aspect of nurturing as well as the theatrical one in which Shakespeare represents the art of cooking in the banquet scenes. A banqueting table is not a space without a conflict, but a site where one not only encounters the Other but also attempts to assimilate ‘otherness’, both within and without the self, in terms of gender, class, race and nationality. It should also be noted that banqueting
practice brings that which is marginal to the table, where the artificial almost supersedes nature. The artificiality of the banquet contrasts with that of the feast, the feast being an extravagant mixture of all sorts of food and drink, but the artificiality of banquets themselves is necessarily contained in the comprehensiveness of feasts.

The question of blurred boundaries between the terms banquet and feast in *Titus Andronicus* will be clarified when they are compared with banquets and feasts as represented in *Macbeth*. Shakespeare transforms Titus’s banquet into those of *Macbeth* in ways that stress features of the Last Supper, incorporating the cannibalistic element into the feast of the three witches. This ambiguous distinction reflects, however, not only the artificiality of the characters in the play, but also social anxiety about various boundaries in the literal and symbolic formation of domestic government. *Titus Andronicus*, as one of the earliest of Shakespeare’s plays, provides us with a good opportunity to examine the early aspects of Shakespearean banquets, which were to be developed throughout the various genres of his works: for example, the association of the banquet with privacy in *Romeo and Juliet* and *All Is True (Henry VIII)*, its affiliation with country-house culture in *The Taming of the Shrew*, the masque element and association with cannibalism in *The Tempest*, and the carnivalesque features of 1 and 2 *Henry IV*. Above all, the public nature of Titus’s banquet is similar to Macbeth’s state banquet. The bloody banquet in *Titus Andronicus* is a prototype of cannibalistic revenge banquet scenes on the Elizabethan stage, soon to be copied by John Marston in *Antonio’s Revenge* and Thomas Heywood in both *The Golden Age* and *The Silver Age*.

*Titus* is also the earliest Shakespearean Roman play to use the banquet as a means of revenge. The private space that a banquet is expected to produce is ideal for arranging an intimate meeting, whether part of some plot to seduce a virgin or to murder a prince. The nature of banquets represented in *Titus Andronicus*, however, is more difficult to define than it appears. It is possible that Shakespeare’s idea of banquets was still in embryo, but was to be developed in his more sophisticated plays of the later period. One may note the confusion or ambiguity in his use of these two words, feast and banquet, as one of the characteristics of the play. The question that needs to be asked is whether one can observe any ‘dramaturgy of the margins’ in Shakespeare’s representations of feast and banquets. What kind of dramatic effect was intended by the ambiguity of this verbal pair in displaying the bloody body parts on the table?

What all these comparisons with possible sources and analogues mean is that one finds a unique example in a private banquet scene such as Act III, Scene 2 in Shakespeare’s *Titus Andronicus*. The significance of the private setting is, as mentioned before, closely related to the fashion of banqueting practices in Elizabethan upper and upper-middle-class culture. This tiny scene constitutes a significant moment in the whole play, for it focuses on the question of how to interpret the riddle. In this banquet, the biggest riddle is Lavinia herself, with her tongue and hands forcibly removed from her body. She is a living emblem waiting to be interpreted. Titus tries to ‘interpret all her martyred signs’ (III.2.36):

She says she drinks no other drink but tears,
Brewed with her sorrow, mashed upon her cheeks.
Speechless complainer, I will learn thy thought.
In thy dumb action will I be as perfect
As begging hermits in their holy prayers.
Thou shalt not sigh, nor hold thy stumps to heaven,
Nor wink, nor nod, nor kneel, nor make a sign,
But I of these will wrest an alphabet,
And by still practice learn to know thy meaning.

(III. 2. 37-45)

The Elizabethan banquet, distinct from a feast, was an occasion on which diners could enjoy the practice not only of eating but also of interpreting ‘conceitful’ or intricate dishes. It was especially fashionable in the Elizabethan age to use ‘elaborate sets of void roundels’, little plates at desserts, ‘often decorated on the back with various scenes, emblems, or verses’. Anthony Munday, a pamphleteer and playwright for the city pageant and commercial stage, wrote a book called *A Banquet of Dainty Conceits*, published in 1588 ‘at the desire of bothe Honorable and Worshipfull personages, who haue had copies of diuers of the Ditties heerein contained’. Banqueters could enjoy all these rare conceits found not only in and on sweetmeats and dishes but also in the sweet music, and in a private space such as a banqueting room conceitfully designed and built for this purpose.

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The episode of the fly in Act III, Scene 2 is an important turning-point. At first, Titus’s way of thinking appears too absolutist to interpret the meaning of Marcus’s killing of the fly. His obstinate attitude of blaming his brother for this simple act even looks hypocritical, for he changes his mind completely after hearing the reason why he killed the fly: ‘Pardon me, sir, it was a black ill-favoured fly,/ Like to the Empress’ Moor. Therefore I killed him’ (III. 2. 66-7). Titus instantly begs his pardon and understands that Marcus has `done a charitable deed.’ Then he attempts to kill the fly again ‘as if it were the Moor/ Come hither purposely to poison me’. Marcus deplores the fact that Titus ‘takes
false shadows for true substances'. However, this power of delusion, or madness, turns into the very means of resisting evil enemies, for the Queen and her sons come to mock him later, disguised because they believe they are safe while he is mad. Titus secludes himself further from the other members of his family, only taking with him Lavinia and a 'boy', his grandson:

Come, take away. Lavinia, go with me.
I'll to thy closet and go read with thee
Sad stories chanced in the times of old.
Come, boy, and go with me. Thy sight is young,
And thou shalt read when mine begin to dazzle.

(III.2.80-3)

This scene is effectively placed just before the significant scene in which the riddle of Lavinia is resolved when she suggests the association of the Philomela story in Ovid with that of her own situation. After the names of the rapists are disclosed, the plot moves swiftly towards revenge. The banquet of revenge in the final scene is preceded by an unusual masque of the Queen and her two sons in Act V, Scene 2. They enter disguised as Revenge, Rape and Murder to make Titus believe that she is 'Revenge, sent from below/ To join with him and right his heinous wrongs' (V.2.3-4). Then they knock at his study. Like the closet mentioned in the first banquet scene, the study is one of the most private spaces in the home. This not only suggests the very private nature of the masque but also gives a special meaning to the following banquet scene. The banquet in the last scene is public in form, but it stays private because it is held in the house of Titus.

This sense of ambiguity between the private and public can be found in the confused usage of 'banquet' and 'feast' by both Tamora and Titus. Disguised as Revenge, Tamora suggests that Titus bid his son Lucius, who is threatening Rome with a 'band of warlike Goths' (V.2.113), 'come and banquet at thy house'. She continues, 'When he is here, even at thy solemn feast,/ I will bring in the Empress and her sons' (V.2.115-6). Hearing this 'device', Titus promptly calls Marcus to bring Lucius and tells him 'the Emperor and the Empress too/ Feast at my house, and he shall feast with them' (V.2.122-3). Titus uses the word 'feast' here, while 'banquet' is used later in the same scene in which he starts to prepare for the bloody 'banquet'. Soon after Tamora leaves her two sons behind, Titus discovers who Rape and Murder are, that is, Chiron and Demetrius. When they are bound fast by Publius, Marcus' son, Titus appears with a knife, and Lavinia with a basin. This grotesque narrative is worthy of full quotation to illustrate the vivid moment of Titus' textual practice, in which the terms 'feast' and 'banquet' are used in a complicated way:

TITUS:
Come, come, Lavinia. Look, thy foes are bound.
Sirs, stop their mouths. Let them not speak to me,
But let them hear what fearful words I utter.
O villains, Chiron and Demetrius!
Here stands the spring whom you have stained with mud,
This goodly summer with your winter mixed.

Hark, wretches, how I mean to martyr you.
This one hand yet is left to cut your throats,
Whiles that Lavinia 'tween her stumps doth hold
The basin that receives your guilty blood.
You know your mother means to feast with me,
And calls herself Revenge, and thinks me mad.
Hark, villains, I will grind your bones to dust,
And with your blood and it I'll make a paste,
And of the paste a coffin I will rear,
And make two pasties of your shameful heads,
And bid that strumpet, your unhallowed dam,
Like to the earth swallow her own increase.
This is the feast that I have bid her to,
And this the banquet she shall surfeit on;
For worse than Philomel you used my daughter,
And worse than Progne I will be revenged.
And now, prepare your throats. Lavinia, come.
Receive the blood, and when that they are dead
Let me go grind their bones to powder small,
And with this hateful liquor temper it,
And in that paste let their vile heads be baked.
Come, come, be everyone officious
To make this banquet, which I wish may prove
More stern and bloody than the Centaurs' feast.

He cuts their throats
So, now bring them in, for I'll play the cook
And see them ready against their mother comes.

Exeunt [carrying the bodies]

(V.2.165-170, 179-204; my emphasis)

The main dish at Titus's banquet, or feast, is of course two pies, in which the heads of Tamora's sons are baked. As this kind of pie is usually for the main course of a dinner or feast, the banquet in the final scene should be better understood as a banquet in the modern sense. The sense of the ending in Titus Andronicus is completely different from its classical sources, and is grave enough to make the audience feel the new order embodied in the new generation, represented by Lucius, the surviving son of Titus.

The tradition of the banquet, in Renaissance tragedy, evokes the split between private political aims and public duties of care. At the same time, it
to the ideal of hospitable feasting': `The progression of banquets. The host', Palmer writes, `submits his designs upon me dramatic effect of Shakespearean tragedy, Palmer supported by the larger system of prestation'. To sum up the dramatic effect of Shakespearean tragedy, Palmer compares the banquets in Titus Andronicus to Macbeth's banquets. The host', Palmer writes, 'submits his designs to the ideal of hospitable feasting'. 'The progression of dramatic action pauses over this confluence of hopes and fears; and the host finds that he cannot control the entertainment, that hospitality has enabled his tragic end'. Although he discusses the two banquet scenes in Macbeth (I.7; III.4) as 'mirroring each other, echoing and anticipating many such hospitable affairs on the Renaissance stage', one remains unsure as to what Macbeth's banquet means—whether it is a supper, dinner, feast or dessert course. As it turns out, the failed or interrupted banquets of Capulet and Macbeth are considered to be as representations of confusion and indeterminacy, signifying the host's bad management of his household.

Images of nurturing men are also part of the representations of terror which can be felt in the uncertainty or indeterminacy of the boundaries, akin to what Mary Douglas referred to as 'dirt' or 'danger'. In Titus, one of the significant representations of horror is human body parts that symbolise the intersection of the human body and food at the bloody banquet. The final banquet in Titus Andronicus is thus similar to that of Macbeth: both of them represent a confused state of household management by blurring the categorical and therefore spatial boundaries between feasts and banquets. In such cases, one finds it difficult to tell one from the other—the banquet from the feast. It is appropriate, then, to examine Titus’s so-called banquets closely, for Shakespearean repasts which have structural significance occur, as Harold Metz says, 'somewhat more frequently in the tragedies than might have been anticipated'.

The art of cooking that Titus displays upon the stage is one of the distinctive features of the play. His practice of this art, however, not only exhibits his paternal authority within his household, but also helps to portray patriarchal society, both Roman and Elizabethan, on the margins of the public and private, in the form of both the ritual and everyday practices of banqueting. The enactment of patriarchy in Titus Andronicus is depicted in a way that emblematically represents the marginalisation of others, and we are invited to observe Titus's ritualistic banquets as a perverted version of culinary practice in Elizabethan England.

Notes


2 For a general discussion of the relevant question, see Mary Beth Rose, 'Where are the Mothers in Shakespeare? Options for Gender Representation in the English Renaissance', SQ, 42 (1991), 291-314.

3 The emendation improves the metre, removes the discrepancy with "he" in the following line, and keeps the emphasis appropriately on fathers; Titus elsewhere addresses Marcus as “brother”. Compositor E, who set this passage, substitutes “Mother” for “brother” at Hamlet V.2.190/3458. As for ‘dirges’, it glosses that ‘F is very weak … The OED offers little support for ‘doings’; ‘dirges’ (used in Lucrece and Romeo) is perfect sense and might have been misread as “doings”’. See Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor, William Shakespeare: A Textual Companion (New York: Norton, 1997), p. 212n. III.2.60/1375.

4 Wells and Taylor, p. 212n. III.2.60/1375.

5 Marion Wynne-Davies discusses this womb-tomb association, comparing a dark cave in Act II, Scene 3 to the vagina, the all consuming sexual mouth of the feminine earth, which remains outside the patriarchal order of Rome: ‘This is the “swallowing womb” (239) that links female sexuality to death and damnation.’ See ‘‘The Swallowing Womb”: Consumed and Consuming Women in Titus Andronicus', in The Matter of Difference: Materialist Feminist Criticism of Shakespeare, ed. Valerie Wayne (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1991), pp. 129-51 (esp. 134). For the ‘central and over-determined symbolic significance’ of ‘the abhorred pit’ as ‘vagina, womb, tomb, and mouth’, see David Willbern, ‘Rape and Revenge in Titus Andronicus’, English Literary Renaissance, 8 (1978), 159-82 (p. 168).


17 Ibid., p. 96.
18 Ibid., p. 112.
22 For a study of private supper and public feast, see Ann Christensen, 'Private Supper/Public Feast: Gender, Power, and Nurture in Early Modern England' (unpublished doctoral thesis, U of Illinois, 1992). I owe much to her groundbreaking study of this topic. The distinction between the private and the public is fully theorised in her reading of early modern drama based on Bakhtinian theory, but remains unsatisfactory for my aim of historicising the emerging cultural and social consciousness of the difference between feasting and banqueting practices of the period.
23 George Peele anticipated Shakespeare's use of the cannibalistic banquet in a banquet scene with dead men's heads and bones offered 'in dishes' in his The Battle of Alcazar (first performed 1588-9, first published in 1594): 'Enter to the bloudie banket' (Q). An editor's stage direction for the fourth dumb show at the beginning of Act IV is 'Enter a banket brought in by two moores. Enter to the bloudie banket Sebastian, Muly Mahamet, the Duke of Avero, and Stukely. To them enter Death and three Furies, on with bloudie banket And keep in the prompt-book for performance. Based on the rare-word test, he assumes the date for the scene to be 'approximately contemporary with such plays as Romeo and Juliet and Richard II' (Introduction', p. 41), that is, around 1595-6. The Cambridge editor also generally agrees with Bate that Shakespeare seems to have added this scene 'sometime after 1594 to exploit a vague for mad scenes'. See William Shakespeare, Titus Andronicus, ed. Alan Hughes, New Cambridge Shakespeare (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994), p. 48.
25 Christensen, 'Nurturing Men', p. 329.
26 Ibid., p. 328.
27 Ibid., p. 327.
28 Ibid., p. 329.
29 Ibid., p. 327.
These limbs were cooked in shocking pies as in the scene from *Titus Andronicus*. Concluding the play with a bloody revenge banquet scene, as Chris Meads argues, has been a kind of 'established form', as seen in such plays as *Titus Andronicus, Antonio's Revenge* (John Marston, 1600), *The Revenger's Tragedy* (Anon. [Thomas Middleton? Cyril Tourneur?], 1606), *Valentinian* (John Fletcher, 1614), *The Bloody Brother* (Fletcher [with Massinger?; Jonson?], 1619), *The Noble Spanish Soldier* (Thomas Dekker [S. R.], 1626), and *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* (John Ford, 1632). See Chris Meads, *Banquets Set Forth: Banqueting in English Renaissance Drama* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 2001), p. 208.

34 See n. 15 above.
38 In his essay, 'Of Studies', Francis Bacon writes: 'Studies serve for delight, for ornament, and for ability. Their chief use for delight, is in privateness and retiring, for ornament, is in discourse, and for ability, is in the judgment and disposition of business'. See Francis Bacon, *The Essays or Counsels Civil and Moral*, ed. Brian Vickers (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999), p. 114. Bacon's frequent use of culinary metaphors in this section (e.g. digestion and distillation) may suggest the increasing significance of privacy both in eating and thinking for establishing the self.
42 Metz, *Earliest Tragedy*, p. 93.