ACTING SHAKESPEARE: A Roundtable Discussion with Artists from the Utah Shakespeare Festival's 2012 Production of *Titus Andronicus*

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Featuring: Dan Kremer (Titus Andronicus), Corey Jones (Aaron), Jacqueline Antaramian (Tamora), A. Bryan Humphrey (Marcus Andronicus), Melisa Pereyra (Lavinia), and Jeb Burris (Chiron)

Flachmann: Welcome to the actor roundtable discussion on *Titus Andronicus*, part of this year's Wooden O Symposium. After an initial wave of popularity during Shakespeare's time, this play has gotten some remarkably bad press, all the way from Edward Ravenscroft in 1687, who called it "a heap of rubbish," to T.S. Elliot's infamous comment that it was "one of the stupidest and most uninspired plays ever written." All I can say in response is that they obviously didn't see your brilliant production of the play. [applause] So my first question is, how did you guys solve this difficult script? What did you do to make this play, which has gotten so much bad publicity, such a wonderful production? Who wants to respond to that?

Humphrey: Brilliant casting. [laughter]

Flachmann: Absolutely right, Bryan. Anything else?

Burris: The cutting of the play by our director, Henry Woronicz, and you, Michael, focuses almost exclusively on the action of the play, as opposed to people commenting on what's going to happen and then telling you again why it happened or how they feel about what happened, which I think makes it move

very rapidly and keeps the audience engaged through the entire sequence of events. So it was extremely action-oriented.

Flachmann: One lovely example of that, Jeb, is that Titus doesn't explain what he is going to do to the two boys before he prepares dinner. It just happens. Does that work comfortably for you actors? Would you prefer we had the additional lines in there, or is it effective without them? Our idea was to streamline it and cut right to the chase.

Burris: I think it definitely works because it gives us an opportunity to tell our character's story without having to worry about instructing the audience how they should feel, and it gives the audience a chance to experience their natural emotions rather than the ones dictated by the script. When Dan comes out and tells our mother that we're in the pie she's eating, you get to see it right there as opposed to anticipating that it's about to happen, which affords a bigger and more theatrical surprise.

Kremer: I also think our production focuses on the humanity of the characters as opposed to the sensationalism so often associated with them. The gore and violence is, I think, secondary to the reality of the characters and the passionate heart that's inside all of them.

Flachmann: That's well said, Dan. Jacquie, anything to add?

Antaramian: I think the ultimate test of any good production is how well you tell the story. It has to be clean and honest and intelligent, because the audience is very intelligent. I do think this play has a universal quality to it. These characters are human beings taken to extremes. What do they do when their son is slaughtered, their daughter is raped and her tongue cut out? To what extent is the revenge in the play justified?

Flachmann: One possible way to look at the show is that you precipitate the revenge, Dan, beginning with your insistence on the honor of avenging your children's deaths. Jacquie certainly begs you not to do it. Is that the start? Do you see that as the beginning of the revenge plot, or am I misrepresenting your character's motives?

Kremer: The difference between revenge and justice is defined by the person who is exacting it. At the beginning of the play, Titus feels quite justified in his action of taking Alarbus as a sacrificial gift from the army he has conquered. That does

precipitate the violence that ensues. So it's up to each of us to define what "justice" and "revenge" are. In order to arrive at that definition, we have to look deeper into ourselves.

Flachmann: That's a great answer. We not only hire brilliant actors, but brilliant human beings. [laughter] Jacquie, I'm guessing that you're not buying Dan's description of the killing of your first-born son as "justice"? [laughter] Am I right on that?

Antaramian: Yes. His suggestion is entirely unreasonable to Tamora. They are already captives, and Titus is saying they are going to cut off Alarbus' limbs in a religious ceremony, which is an extremely emotional experience for her to endure. As a queen, she begged Titus on her knees not to kill him, so her rejected humility fuels her desire for revenge. What's interesting to me is that Titus kills his youngest son because he is helping Bassianus abduct Lavinia. Everybody kind of forgets about that. [laughter] Then Tamora goes crazy. Not only does she want all the Andronici dead, but she does a horrific thing by setting her sons on Lavinia. But after that, she doesn't kill anybody. She just lets people do the killing for her. When Titus helps Lavinia kill Tamora's sons, I would say that is a justifiable action, and everybody is thrilled that Lavinia gets to exact revenge on the boys. But instead of just stopping there, Titus cuts them up and puts them in a pie for the mother to eat. So the revenge has been exacted, but then he goes a step further, just like Tamora goes a step further with her sons by saying instead of just killing Lavinia, you can do whatever you want with her.

Flachmann: Actually, don't Chiron and Demetrius begin the myth? In other words, everybody in Shakespeare's audience would have known the story in which Philomela was raped and her tongue cut out so she couldn't betray her attackers. Titus simply completes this well-known allegory. We look at Titus's actions as such a macabre way of affecting revenge, but he's simply satisfying the requirements of the myth. Dan?

Kremer: I think the world of the play has different layers of violence. The violence that Titus exacts on Mutius, which is a sudden occurrence, carries a different weight because Mutius is a soldier. A different standard in this culture and certainly in this play is applied to those who are soldiers, those who are dedicated combatants, as opposed to those who are the innocents. When the

violence is turned on those innocent people, the level of revenge or hatred is amped up. Yes, Titus kills Mutius, but his son is there as a soldier. He comes armed and stands in the way, and Titus reacts. Titus's mind certainly justifies killing Alarbus, Tamora's son, who is sacrificed as a ritualistic response to the deaths of Titus's own sons. As Titus says, "Religiously they ask a sacrifice. / To this your son is marked, and die he must / T'appease their groaning shadows that are gone." A soldier is a tool used for warfare, and part of the covenant of being a soldier is that you have to accept the presence of death.

Flachmann: Thank you, Dan. While we are on the topic of revenge, I want to get Jeb, Melisa, and Corey involved in the debate. How do you three fit into this process?

Burris: What it boiled down to for me is the love between mother and son. She says the worse to her, the better love for me. That's really all that Chiron and Demetrius need: The worse we treat Lavinia, the more our mother will love us. And Aaron is also a father figure to us. Chiron and Demetrius don't come up with any plans on their own, but we are very good at following orders. Talking about the extreme circumstances, we are first brought on as prisoners, and then we're freed, and all of a sudden our mother is the empress, and they're calling us "lords" within a matter of five minutes. With mom as the empress, there's literally nothing we can't get away with, especially when she's telling us to do these things.

Flachmann: So you are basically blaming this on your mother? Is that what you are trying to do? [laughter]

Burris: We are certainly not innocent. As Dan said, we are soldiers, too. We have been fighting for "Gothlandia" [laughter], so we have no problem putting knives in people's backs and doing all these horrific deeds.

Jones: Especially when you're getting advice from the African mercenary in the room. [laughter] But seriously, I believe that revenge plays a significant role in the course of action that Aaron takes in the play. I feel his experience of being a POW and witnessing Tamora—his lover—lose her son despite her heartbreaking pleas, plus whatever injustice he has suffered in the past at the hands of the Roman empire, all motivate him to mastermind this scheme of gruesome retribution.

Flachmann: Thank you, Corey. Melisa, what would you like to add?

Pereyra: Lavinia doesn't seek revenge until the very end. We all learn from our elders in this culture. She can't even eat without thinking about what happened to her; her very existence is a reminder of the horror she endured. What finally snaps her out of this crazy, withdrawn state is when Titus gives her something to do. He says, "Bear thou my hand, sweet wench, between thy teeth." There's dad telling her to get up, be a soldier, and do this, which in itself gives her the power to respond to what has been done to her. But the action of killing the sons only satisfies for a moment, and then they have dinner. [laughter] After that satisfaction is gone, how can I possibly continue to live? Yes, I took vengeance against the people who did these atrocities to me, but it's not enough. She can't live like this, and I think that is why the decision is made between her and Titus that she has to die. It's time. She has done all she can to bring peace to herself, and it's still not sufficient, so only her death can provide complete relief.

Flachmann: Perhaps I'm reading too much into this moment, Melisa, but it seems to me that after you pick up the hand and exit the stage, you're standing straighter, and you have a little bit more dignity in your character. Am I right?

Pereyra: Absolutely. It's physical story telling. I don't have words. All I have is my body. Henry definitely made me think a lot about how I could tell her journey with my body. After she has been wounded, Marcus describes her as a deer "that hath received some unrecurring wound." So that image started to reverberate in my head. What does that look like? What does that feel like? That is why my body shook, my eyes were wide, and every movement made by those around me was perceived as a danger. After she is raped, Lavinia is left on the stage with nothing but her survival instincts, and I wanted to portray that as clearly as possible even though I had no words. My physicality changes throughout the play depending on the given circumstances. Since I don't speak anymore, the events that take place after the rape change my body, unlike the other characters in the play who have words to express their feelings. I felt that when Lavinia picks up the hand in her teeth, she gets some part of her spirit back because she is being told what to do. She is now in charge of helping to move the

action of the play forward. If her tongue hadn't been cut out, she would have a long speech here, one that would empower her, the other characters on stage, and the audience. This responsibility must still be fulfilled. So when I was instructed by Titus to pick up the hand, I relaxed my shoulders (which I had been deliberately trying to hide my face in), I straightened my spine (which up until this point had been curved, as if making my body smaller would help me disappear), and for the first time I looked Titus in the eye with no more tears to shed, but with a hunger for action. I picked up the hand with pride, with anger, with a beastly lust for revenge. The change you saw in my body was the physical representation of her new psychological and emotional state.

Flachmann: Thank you, Melisa. Bryan, it seems to me that you participate in the revenge plot, but you're also what we literary types would call a "choral figure."

Humphrey: The turning point of the play is when Marcus hits on the inspiration of using the staff to uncover who has done this to Lavinia. When she reveals who caused this misery and suffering, Titus immediately shifts to the revenge plot. At that point, everything has a focus that it didn't have before. Marcus becomes a part of the family's revenge at that moment, but I think we have to remember that this is a very old legend. Aristotle explained that "tragedy" should create in the audience a catharsis or a cleansing effect, and that's exactly what Shakespeare was doing with this play. At the end of the production, Henry reassigned the lines to Marcus in which he addresses Rome and asks, "Have we done aught amiss?" For all of us as actors who have to get inside our roles so we can justify our actions and make them work, the real issue is about revenge and justice. Marcus is left standing at the conclusion, but he is also there to raise these questions as the chorus.

Flachmann: Thank you, Bryan. Jacquie, is revenge more forgivable when conducted by a male than by a female?

Antaramian: When you create destruction on an innocent, everybody takes it differently. As Bryan was saying, as long as we have been alive we have been wrestling with these questions. In matters of war, in matters of peace, when do we exact revenge as justice, when do we find such actions justifiable—especially if your son or daughter is involved? How should we view a woman

who is not a part of war, not a part of that "honor" system, who wants to exact revenge? Should we view her differently? It's a question to think about.

Humphrey: We have neatly segued into another topic: To what extent does power change behavior? In the beginning of the play, as Jeb mentioned, these Goths were all prisoners, and with a word from the emperor, they are suddenly free. Immediately, Tamora becomes the empress, and her sons become lords of the realm. They're invested with the morality of power, and Tamora swiftly begins to use that power against the Andronici to exact her revenge. As soon as the power shifts, the Andronici endure horror upon horror, to the point that we're surrounded by severed hands and heads, and Titus finally asks, "When will this fearful slumber have an end?" When Titus tells Lavinia that she can still do something—pick up his hand in her teeth—he's inviting her to reclaim some power for herself. She is not totally helpless. And Marcus says you have the power to tell us who did this if you can write their names in the sand. Again, the helplessness is overcome by empowerment. And as soon as they regain their power, they begin to exact another level of justice. That's an important question: What do we do when we have the power to enact justice or revenge, and when do we find the courage to break that cycle of victimhood? That's a question we all struggle with.

Flachmann: That's brilliant, Bryan. On a slightly different topic, one of the great joys of seeing plays in repertory is that we encounter cross-pollination of themes, and one of the strongest this summer involves parents and children. What do you think Shakespeare is saying about the relationships between parents and children in *Titus Andronicus*, Melisa?

Pereyra: The chemistry between Dan and me has to be strong enough to convey the love between a father and his daughter. After I've been raped and dismembered in the play, my first thought is that I don't want my father to see me. How is she going to tell her dad what has happened to her? When he sees her, it breaks her heart, and I almost can't remain standing because it's so difficult not only to be in front of my father in that way, but for him to see me. It's that duality of beauty and horror at the same time that lives and exists in all of Shakespeare's plays: the dark and the light always happening at the same time.

Flachmann: Jacquie and Jeb, since you play mother and son in the play, what can you add to this topic?

Burris: It's really interesting that all Chiron and Demetrius have is their mother. Growing up with a mother and two older sisters, as I did, I'm very aware of that feminine relationship and its effect on me. And Titus has all these sons and only one daughter. I think it's wonderful for Shakespeare to play those opposites against each other.

Antaramian: This play starts with a mother pleading for her son. That relationship begins the revenge plot, after which the father and the daughter go through their journey together. So it all stems from those two relationships. It starts with one and morphs into another parent/child dynamic in the play.

Flachmann: There has been some controversy, Melisa, about whether you embrace your death at the end of the play, about whether there's an agreement between you and Titus. Is that something you would feel comfortable talking about?

Pereyra: Absolutely. This is definitely a topic I discussed with Henry, our director. Since the script doesn't dictate exactly what happens, we had to make our own decision about the conditions of her death. In our production, Lavinia needs to die. It all goes back to what Titus says when he asks Saturninus if it was well done of rash Virginius to "kill his daughter with his own right hand / Because she was enforced, stained, and deflowered?" And Saturninus says yes, "Because the girl should not survive her shame / And by her presence still renew his sorrows." Every day, both she and her father would have been reminded of the horrible events that had taken place.

Kremer: Yes, I completely agree with what Melisa said, and the only comment I would add is that in that final moment, I return to the idea of empowerment. They both agree they have the power to end this nightmare they've endured, though Lavinia needs some assistance with doing it. But I think that is included in their agreement: Part of the bond they make is to help each other out of this nightmare.

Antaramian: But why does she have to die? Why are there so many cultures in our modern world where a shamed girl cannot face her father? It's not Lavinia's fault that she was raped. It's not her fault that she was mutilated. If the father is shamed,

his daughter shouldn't live anymore? Why isn't the father saying, "It doesn't matter; we will get through this. Your life is more important than my honor." These are questions that should be raised in today's world.

Flachmann: I think that's a great response, Jacquie. Bryan?

Humphrey: We were in a talk-back a couple of weeks ago in your Camp Shakespeare program, Michael, and two of the ladies who had seen other productions of the play were struck by how much Lavinia was held and comforted and cared for in our show. She was not an object of abhorrence. So I think that's one of the aspects of our production that has to do with parents, children, and family.

Flachmann: I agree entirely, Bryan. How does everyone feel about the way this production stylizes its violence? We do it kabuki style, with red streamers and cloths for blood. That was a choice we made last November, which is what Henry wanted. How does a decision like that affect the actors?

Antaramian: I find it chilling and much more effective than if you had actual blood and gore. I think that's what theatre does so well: It's the suggestion of the horrific that is so compelling. And I think that was a brilliant choice by Henry. This production opens up a window into your imagination. We give you a hint of violence, and you provide the rest. What your mind can think up is so much worse than anything we could ever do! This is not the movies; this is the theatre, and this production takes you to a very poetic level. That's something that Henry discussed early in the rehearsal period: This world is a mixture of beauty and horror.

Flachmann: Thank you, Jacquie. Jeb?

Burris: Because the theatre is a shared experience, having fake blood would be a disservice to the audience by not allowing them to use their imagination. And in pragmatic terms as an actor, there's nothing worse than having to worry about where your blood pack is, whether it's going to open and spill all over everything, and whether the audience is going to see the blood pack when I get rid of it. It's just great to be able to stab and let the audience imagine blood spurting from Bassianus' neck. I don't have to worry about it. There's no blood on my costume. I don't have to wash my hands back stage. It's a win-win situation. [laughter]

Flachmann: Who are the true barbarians in this play?

Burris: The Romans. After Alarbus is sacrificed, I ask Tamora, "Was ever Scythia half so barbarous?" As allegedly cruel as the Goths are, I've never seen anyone chop someone's limbs off just to appease their gods. That to me is absolutely insane!

Flachmann: Corey, Aaron is the mastermind behind much of the mayhem and violence in the play. What was your approach to playing such a heinous character?

Jones: Well, my first goal was not to judge his actions but to justify them, to find some rationale about why he has chosen this path and why he makes the decisions he makes. As I mentioned earlier, Titus's killing of Alarbus and his immediate rejection of Tamora's plea for his life was one justification for me. Also, I used my experience as a prisoner under Titus, which we see at the beginning of the play, as another reason to exact revenge on the Andronici. I was interested in building a full, rich back-story, a history, for Aaron that helped me trace what may have happened in his past that led to his determination to not only justify his actions, but to relish them. That included imagining his experiences in Africa as a boy, becoming a skilled and bloodthirsty warrior, and ending up as an alien in a foreign land.

Flachmann: And this back-story helps you succeed in your plans, at least until the baby comes along. [laughter]

Jones: Yes, the fruit of his loins destroys the fruit of his labor. [laughter] The baby certainly throws a monkey wrench into the program, and Aaron is forced to "audible" and make new plans almost immediately. For the first time in his life, he has to put someone else's well being and needs before his own. And that's what makes Aaron such a fascinating character to play: Just when you're ready to hate this guy and condemn him, he does something utterly human and chooses to fight for his child despite the fact that it jeopardizes everything he's doing in Rome as the right-hand man/lover to the empress. It helps to add a third dimension to Aaron, which is something Henry and I thought was essential to make him work as a character, rather than as a caricature.

Flachmann: Dan, we've been talking a lot this week about the play at our Wooden O Symposium, and a question that has come up frequently is whether Titus is at any point in the play truly mad. Is that something you'd feel free to discuss, or would you rather leave that unspoken?

Kremer: Oh, that's a large and complicated question. The short answer is, yes, I think he does slip into madness. To return to what I was dwelling on earlier in the issue of powerlessness and empowerment, I think that the madness overwhelms Titus when he feels completely helpless. In the fly scene that opens our second part of the play, you see the family at their worst, I think. And that's the time when Titus's grip on reality is at its weakest. I think he's drifting in and out of his own reality. Interestingly, as soon as he has the opportunity to focus on something, to fixate on revenge, he begins to return to some kind of sanity and regain a grasp on reality. In terms of the previous question, I think all the characters in this play devolve into barbarism. I don't think there are clear- cut good and bad guys. When I was in college, I took a philosophy course in which this question was posed for the final exam: "Is it progress if a cannibal uses a knife and a fork?" [laughter]

Humphrey: Did you pass?

Kremer: I did. Lately, I've been collecting cannibal jokes and some good Chianti. [laughter]

Flachmann: The costumes have been interesting in this production, particularly yours, Melisa.

Pereyra: Yes, Kevin Coppenhaver created some of the most stunning and intricate costumes I have ever worn. I was overwhelmed when I saw the sketches, but I knew I would have to work one hundred times harder if I wanted to look as good as they did! [laughter] Our first dress rehearsal was challenging for me because these costumes carry a life of their own. They told me so much about Lavinia every time I put one of them on. I had to learn not only how to move and breathe in them, but also how to fill them with purpose, with emotion, with a soul. I feel that the more beautiful my costume is, the better I have to be as an actor. Then, of course, I had to get used to the practical side of wearing my costume. The first dress I wear has a higher waist, which rests exactly where my ribs expand to breathe. This means I focused my breath deep in my belly and expanded it more than my ribs. My second costume is bloody and torn, and I wear a cowl over my mouth, which meant I had to find a way to hold my neck and jaw in a position that would ensure it would stay on. My last costume was my favorite, the warrior costume! [laughter]

Putting it on fueled my desire to kill Chiron and Demetrius. I have a funny story about that costume. I have braces on my wrists under the costume that prevent me from moving them. I have to ask my dresser for water when we are offstage because I really am helpless. I can't do anything. A few days ago I was walking up the stairs while somebody was coming down, and I almost stabbed her with my knives. [laughter] I just forgot they were there. [laughter]

Flachmann: And Corey, your costume was quite interesting as well. Tell us a little bit about that.

Jones: Yes, Kevin gave me a fun, functional, and aesthetically beautiful costume to wear that I thought was a perfect representation of Aaron. The colors and materials were smartly chosen to help distinguish Aaron from the rest of the characters and to accentuate his foreign-ness, his other-ness in this world. Aaron is an African mercenary who is very comfortable in the natural world, so having a doublet made of goat fur; a corset, posture collar, and scabbard made of leather; and boots made of suede instantly connected me to that natural, animalistic world.

Flachmann: And that mohawk?

Jones: Yes, the mohawk was definitely a fun piece to wear that helped define the look and feel of this character. Kevin was very open to the idea, which I suggested when we first started rehearsal, because I wanted something a little different than my usual bald head, which I wear for every production. [laughter] I wanted something exotic and sexy that was an expression of Aaron's heritage and masculinity, and the mohawk certainly delivered on that.

Flachmann: The Goth costumes and make-up have also occasioned lots of discussion, particularly the black circles under the Goths' eyes.

Antaramian: They're traditionally from the Scandinavian areas and Germanic tribes, so they are barbarians in the Romans' eyes. They're probably more in touch with nature, however, since they are from primitive, tribal societies. When we came to the first read-through, we had these costumes shown to us, so we had to figure out who the Goths were because we didn't create the costumes. I said to myself, I'm going to have this headdress, and I'm going to wear this green alligator outfit. [laughter] I think the costumes help illustrate the difference between what is perceived as a barbaric world and the barbarity of a civilized world.

Humphrey: I believe the Greeks were the ones who came up with the idea that anybody who wasn't a Greek was a barbarian. [laughter]

Flachmann: To what extent is Saturninus responsible for what happens in this play?

Kremer: I think because Saturninus is threatening to take up arms to defend his right to be named emperor, Titus is just looking for a way to stop the bloodshed. If Titus had picked Bassianus, and Bassianus wanted to marry Lavinia, they would have gone off and lived happily ever after, but it would have been a very short play. [laughter] It's a caution to us all that we should choose wisely in an election year. [laughter]

Flachmann: Please send any letters and postcards directly to Mr. Kremer. [laughter]

Antaramian: Saturninus is very capricious. He's just not made to be a ruler. I think he chooses Lavinia first to egg on Titus to see how he will react. Saturninus wanted to get a rise out of Titus as opposed to making him happy, so when Lavinia leaves, Saturninus says I really didn't want her anyway. His downfall is his pride. Because of him, three of us die at the end: Titus, Tamora, and Saturninus. Saturninus dies because he's been foolish and ineffective as a leader; Tamora, because she has blood on her hands; and Titus, because he also has blood on his hands, even though his revenge may be justified.

Flachmann: I love the fact that Titus has been out of town long enough to be unaware that Lavinia and Bassianus have gotten together. They obviously haven't been Skyping. [laughter] Jacquie, since we're getting a little frivolous here at the end of our hour, inquiring minds want to know, dear, how long your character has been pregnant in the play? Will you talk about that a little bit?

Antaramian: It's tricky. The way we staged the first private scene between Tamora and Aaron [2.3], he refers to my pregnancy.

Flachmann: He kisses your tummy at one point, doesn't he?

Antaramian: He does. And when I say, "Sweet melodious birds / Be unto us as is a nurse's song / Of lullaby to bring her babe asleep," I believe I am again referring to my unborn child. We finally decided that we had to go for a suspension of disbelief. So in some ways, she hid the pregnancy very well. [laughter] The one thing I still have trouble with is Tamora allegedly saying through

the nurse that the baby must die. If I am fighting for my son's life in the beginning so ferociously that it takes me to such a horrific place of revenge, I don't know how I could want to destroy a child that I had with a man I love. I think that she would probably want to hide it because it would be evidence of an illicit affair as opposed to a baby with Saturninus, but she would not want to kill it.

Flachmann: The baby really helps us see the "human" sides of both Tamora and Aaron, doesn't it? Especially in Aaron's final speeches. How did that develop during rehearsal?

Jones: That section at the end with the Goths was a stroke of genius Henry and I discovered. During that last monologue where Aaron lists all the horrific things he's done, it would be easy to simply dwell in the horror of it all for the entire speech, but we wanted to find some different levels to deepen and texture the moment. Using the baby's cries to interrupt Aaron provided the perfect solution to break the speech up. The baby's sounds make Aaron introspective and help him realize what a monster he has become. He can never be the loving father to this child he had hoped to be; he has chosen his path, and it's not one of compassion and concern for others. He abandons any notion of fatherhood and remorse and fully embraces who he is and what he's done. This is his life's work, and he would have to reject his entire being if he allowed regret to set in. It's a beautiful and tragic moment all at once.

Flachmann: That's a wonderful response. One of the comments Mr. Woronicz made in rehearsal is that this may not be a great play, but it's great theater. It has a mythic quality about it that invites us to look beneath its barbarous surface to the many subtle themes and images we've discussed this morning. Thank you to all our wonderful actors who have taken time out of their busy schedules to visit with us today. [applause] I'd also like to thank our terrific Education Department at the Festival, Michael Bahr and Josh Stavros; the Wooden O Editorial Board, which includes Matt Nickerson, Curt Bostick, Jess Tvordi, and Don Weingust; and our journal editor, Diana Major Spencer; further thanks to all the participants in the Wooden O; and a very special thank you to our wonderful audiences, without whom none of this would have been possible. [applause].