

ERRATA SLIP

McGuinness, Mark (ed.), *Titus Alone: A New Life*
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CLAIRE PEÑATE (PEAKE) – INTRODUCTION

line 1, *for* ‘Titus Alone’ *read* *Titus Alone* (ditto lines 15, 22)
line 2, *for* Father *read* father (ditto lines 5, 24, 31, 33)
line 6, *for* Mother *read* mother
line 7, *for* that *read* and
line 10, *for* Titus Groan *read* *Titus Groan*
line 12, *for* characters *read* characters’
line 13, *for* writs *read* write
line 20, *for* have *read* had
line 21, *for* ‘Gormengast’ *read* Gormenghast
line 21, *for* thought *read* thought.
line 32, *for* Titus Alone *read* *Titus Alone*

NICK FREEMAN - ‘THE INTER-WAR ROOTS OF *TITUS ALONE*’

Bibliography

line 2, *for* Aldington, Richard *read* Fussell, Paul

PIERRE-YVES LE CAM – ‘THE SCIENCE FICTION WORLD OF *TITUS ALONE*’

Two pages are missing from this article, printed below. The bold text appears in the printed book, and the normal face text is missing.

‘The time gap justifies the new standards and techniques, however incredible they may appear to the contemporary world.’

Peake's originality consists in doubling the temporal distortion which affects not only the reader but also Titus. The reader senses in the science to come the technological achievements in *Titus Alone* such as the laser weapon; Titus moves from a medieval environment to a futuristic one, and the earl's wonder is obvious when he sees the scores of rockets or the metal and marble architecture of the dome and the arena:

(There) was a copper dome the shape of an igloo but ninety feet in height, with a tapering mast, spider-frail and glinting in the sunlight (...). The buildings curved away as though to obscure some great circle or arena. And indeed it

was something of this kind that broke upon his view as he rounded the dome, and he came to a halt through sheer amazement; for it was vast. Vast as a grey desert, its marble surface glowing with a dull opaque light.(TA, p.31)

The time gap is all the more striking as it is accompanied by space discontinuity which constitutes a second 'poetic licence'. In Frank Herbert's *Dune*, the future struggle for the spices that are the source of eternal life and prophetic power takes place on a hostile planet on which giant worms are lurking in the desert sand. The transition between Gormenghast and the new world may indeed seem less spectacular than a cosmic trip but the loss of space markers remains effective:

To north, south, east or west, turning at will, it was not long before (Titus's) landmarks fled him.(TA, p.9)

Right from the start, the third Titus book is characterized by the strangeness of the many landscapes the earl encounters:

From the gold shores to the cold shores: through regions thighbone-deep in sumptuous dust: through lands as harsh as metal, he made his way.(TA, p.31)

What with the phonic difference 'Gold'/'Cold' opposing the idea of fertility to that of frigidity and the wide variety of the terrains, the obvious diversity within the sentence underlines extremely unusual contrasts that prepare both reader and hero to dramatic spatial changes. The metaphor 'sumptuous dust' and the comparison 'lands as harsh as metal' can only occur in a different world.

The study of irrational science and of time and space disruption has helped to establish the importance of science fiction in *Titus Alone*. We now have to understand the reason why Peake chose, to the disappointment of many, this particular genre.

The relevance of science fiction may indeed be questioned. The transposition of Titus in a future world apparently negates Gormenghast's fantasy and the values which are advocated in the first two books.

Mythical fantasy 'tends to set human relationships within the scope of permanent features' (Vernier, p.59, my translation). Frank Kermode adds that: 'Myth operates within the diagrams of ritual (...); it is a sequence of radically unchangeable gestures (...). Myths make sense in terms of a lost order of time (Kermode, p.39). And it is precisely the task of the Master of Ritual of Gormenghast to preserve this stability. To a certain extent, the events and the incidents which occur have little importance compared to the castle's perennial dimension. The narrator often reminds us that Titus is the seventy-seventh Earl of Gormenghast, thus suggesting the primacy of ancestral lineage over the individual. By contrast, science fiction favours change which is brought on by new technology. Science fiction does not deal with 'the eternal aspect of man, but (with) men arbitrarily set in a given situation at a certain time' (Vernier, p.59).

Fantasy and science fiction have different purposes and they seem not to match. Yet, this deliberate change of mood answers a particular goal on Peake's part.

Were the reader to summarize the Titus books, he would probably mention the various stages in Titus' life and insist upon the earl's search for his own identity:

The terrible antithesis within him - the tearing in two directions of his heart and head - the divided loyalties - the growing and feverish longing to escape from all that was meant by Gormenghast, and the ineradicable, irrational pride in his lineage, and the love, as deep as hate, which he felt, **unwittingly, for the least of the cold stones of his loveless home.**(G, p.438)'

ANN YEOMAN – 'THE FAR HYENA LAUGHTER: THE PROBLEM OF EVIL IN MERVYN PEAKE'S TITUS ALONE'

1. One page has been printed twice – beginning 'Muzzlehatch is unable to save the Black Rose...'

2. Missing page references for quotations (reproduced here in full):

In modern society our sense of security is so undermined that we often feel we cannot live without belonging to some kind of organization. We fear isolation. The collective is organized like a military corps that deprives us of inner security; it usurps the place of our personal mental models and presents itself as the only point of reference. In a word, we are encouraged to remain infantile, not to think independently. (Carotenuto, p.130)

The isolated being *loses himself* in something other than himself [in the attempt to regain 'both innocence and the intoxication of existence']. What the 'other thing' represents is of no importance. It is still a reality that transcends the common limitations. So unlimited is it that it is not even a thing: it is *nothing*. (Bataille, p.26)