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Rape and Republicanism in Shakespeare's *Lucrece*

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It has become commonplace to argue that sixteenth-century England was not really a monarchy but rather a monarchical republic in which governance was shared between the Court and a variety of other political bodies.[1] Parliament, of course, was the first and foremost of these, but other local entities also exercised power in a semiautonomous fashion. As Patrick Collinson has demonstrated, in towns such as Swallowfield, men of modest standing could debate questions of policy and engage in a limited form of self-rule because of their jurisdictional remoteness from the central government.[2] Counties without powerful resident lords often developed into gentry republics where the real locus of authority was not the Court but prominent local families.[3] Furthermore, even the Court itself was not a cohesive sovereign body. The queen did not govern on her own but through a council that often differed with her on matters of policy and that was capable of imagining itself as ruling on its own should she die without an heir. This form of "self-direction" is particularly evident in the Bond of Association in which the queen's council not only vow to avenge her death but also imagine themselves ruling in her place.[4] Such statements have led to the idea that in Elizabethan England "citizens were concealed within subjects."[5] Practices normally associated with a republic were viewed as compatible with the English form of government, which emphasized the collaborative nature of the relationship between the monarch and other representative political bodies, such as parliament at the national level and various magistracies and councils at the local level.

As Egeus does.

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Andrew Hadfield and Patrick Cheney have both argued that these implicitly republican practices had a significant impact on English writers, especially during the 1590s when economic and political stresses created an atmosphere of crisis in the country.[6] In response to the uncertainties of Queen Elizabeth I's last decade, a discourse of republicanism developed in which the virtues associated with active citizenship were contrasted with the vices that existed at Court. This discourse was not predicated upon abandoning the monarchy in favor of a republic but rather upon the need to inculcate the political virtues that had traditionally been associated with the ancient Romans.[7] These virtues had supposedly flourished after the Tarquins had been expelled and liberty established as the most fundamental value of the Roman state. Elizabethan republicanism championed these same virtues and wished to see them similarly established in England. As Hadfield notes, this championing generally did not take the form of direct advocacy but instead often involved referencing or retelling famous episodes from Roman history in such a way that they became topoi for the cluster of values associated with active citizenship.[8] Building on Hadfield's work, Cheney has examined how Christopher Marlowe's translations of Lucan and Ovid, as well as his numerous references to other prominent figures in republican historiography, helped create a language and technique for advocating liberty and freedom as virtues necessary for any country that wished to avoid lapsing into tyranny.[9] Tracey Sedinger and Debora Shuger have likewise investigated how Sir Philip Sidney employed republicanism in the *Arcadia*.[10] Shuger in particular has drawn attention to the extent to which the final scene of Philip Sidney's romance is a retelling of the famous episode in which Junius Brutus was forced to sentence his own sons to death for intriguing with the exiled Tarquin.[11]

Building on this growing body of literature on Elizabethan republicanism, this essay examines how Shakespeare's *The Rape of Lucrece* appropriates Livy's rape narrative, transforming the Roman historian's focus on male *virtus* into a more nuanced exploration of the complex relationship between gender and sovereign authority.[12] Reading Livy through Shakespeare reveals that the rape is threatening not only because of its brutal and tyrannical nature, but also because it exposes kingship as a political form that prevents men from appropriately exercising lordship in their own households. The significance of Lucrece's rape is not simply that she was violated but that she was violated in her husband's own house. The inability of either Collatine or Lucrece's male kin

Drawing a parallel to how Egeus reacts to Hermia's rebellion from Demtrius: perhaps a reading of this could be that Egeus cares less about who Hermia marries, but in actuality is upset about his losing control of his household.

to shield her from Tarquin's lust revealed that a system predicated upon the household could not adequately serve the needs of the expanding Roman state.[13] The political had to be reconfigured in such a way that patriarchal power was not lodged in the body of a single individual but diffused throughout the male citizen body.[14] As A. N. McLaren has persuasively argued, Elizabethan republicanism did not simply evoke ancient models but was forced to revise them to account for the political reality that a female monarch could successfully wield an implicitly male form of power.[15] By focusing on the psychosexual dynamic of the tale he inherited from Livy, Shakespeare deploys a different, gendered form of republicanism in which key concepts, such as consent and liberty of speech, are refashioned in order to reveal the origins and limits of patriarchal authority.

Perhaps Egeus and Theseus being so Totalitarian is satire, and that's where the comedy was derived from during Shakespeare's time.

If Shakespeare is interested in limiting the power of the patriarchy than casting or playing the Fairies as non binary would accomplish both a Shakespearean ideal as well as explore the gender roles you are looking to explore in the play.

Shakespeare's *Lucrece* was long regarded as an overwrought exercise in rhetorical excess that may have delighted Elizabethans but had little to recommend it to modern audiences.[16] During the last three decades, feminist criticism has largely been responsible for reviving interest in the poem by examining its gender politics. The seminal figure in this movement has been Coppélia Kahn, who set the terms of debate by arguing that *Lucrece* initially allows for female empowerment only to foreclose this possibility when the heroine finally endorses the patriarchal view that chastity is a woman's responsibility, and that to remain "pure," she must not only deny herself sexual pleasure outside of marriage but also restrain men from appropriating her as an object of desire.[17] Philippa Berry concurs with Kahn's argument regarding the impossible restraints and obligations that chastity places upon women, but argues that by granting Lucrece several hundred lines of dialogue, the poem gives her a voice in a way that is unprecedented in Renaissance poetry.[18] Therefore, even if Lucrece ultimately capitulates to patriarchy, her discourse registers her refusal to be silenced by men and instead reserves that right to herself, as her suicide so aptly demonstrates. Building on the notion that the speech act is significant regardless of whether or not it is finally successful, Amy Greenstadt views the victim's recourse to language as an authorial strategy that identifies the poet with Lucrece since both are moving from the safe confines of the private sphere into the public domain, where they can no longer control the effects their words will produce. Lucrece voices her shame and her body circulates in the marketplace in a manner similar to the poet's work, which is subject to the contingencies and uncertainties of public response.[19] Greenstadt argues that

the similarity between these two modes of publication genders authorial subjectivity as feminine, granting Lucrece linguistic agency but also leaving her story available for appropriation, as occurs when Brutus parades her body through the city.

Feminist readings tend to focus, then, on whether the poem ultimately supports or subverts patriarchal structures, and whether Lucrece's speech is foreclosed by the narrative or has meanings that resist narrative closure. More importantly for the purposes of this essay, feminist readings have also highlighted the failures and weaknesses of patriarchal structures in the poem as they strain to contain the impulses and voices to which they have given birth. As Kahn notes, the violence directed at Lucrece within her own home "represents in part the failure of marriage as a means of establishing sexual ownership of women."[20] It is in such failures that we glimpse the structural transformations that patriarchy undergoes as it adjudicates not only the relationship between men and women but also that between different groups of men. Mieke Bal has drawn attention to how this dual process is articulated in Judges, in which the transformation of Israel from a loose confederation of tribes to an integrated state is brokered through changes in the structure of marriage.[21] Tribal integration is the necessary precondition for the emergence of strong kings, who assume the power formerly exercised by the individual patriarchs or "judges" of various tribes. In Livy's history, the rape of Lucrece also brokers a political transformation but in the opposite direction, from kingship to a patrician oligarchy in which power is shared among male power blocs. In fact, Livy's primary concern in the first ten books of the history is tracing the process through which this fraternal power-sharing broadens to include greater numbers of men by opening offices to plebian householders.[22]

This coupled with Hermia's refusal to marry Demetrius; as well as other examples of women taking control in Shakespearean relationships: Lady M, Tamara, etc.. could be used as evidence to show how little Shakespeare agrees w/cares for the importance of traditional gender roles in marriage. It could be used as reasoning to push casting, (what if Lysander is not typically masculine and Hermia has or is styled to be masculine)

As republican discourse became increasingly prevalent during the last decade of Elizabeth's reign, Livy's history acquired a renewed importance as a text that traces in elaborate detail the transition from monarchy to a more broad-based sharing of power among men. Livy was particularly important for the development of this discourse, which emphasized the abuses committed by rulers who pursued their own interests rather than safeguarded those of their subjects. Hadfield has argued that Shakespeare's *Lucrece* represents Tarquin as a prototypical tyrant, gratifying his own lusts at the expense of those entrusted to his care and protection.[23] Significantly, Tarquin's tyranny consists not only of forcing himself upon a woman but also of rejecting the good counsel that Lucrece proffers as she attempts to dissuade him

Could also be a description of Theseus.

Theseus' tyranny consists of forcing his power upon Athens and not recognizing Hippolyta's wisdom and power. This is demonstrated strongly during the play within a play.

from committing sexual assault.[24] Though Lucrece describes in detail how the rape will sully his honor, Tarquin is deaf to her arguments, preferring to satisfy rather than govern his desire. As Colin Burrow has observed, Lucrece's "political oratory" is a "textbook" example of the wisdom that counselors were expected to offer princes to curb their excesses.[25] By having Tarquin reject this advice and instead give rein to his lust, Shakespeare, according to both Burrow and Hadfield, is critiquing the arbitrary and absolutist tendencies that supporters of republicanism increasingly associated with Elizabeth's regime. However, others have seen Lucrece's failure to dissuade Tarquin not as a critique of tyranny but as a representation of language's insufficiency, which prevents us from communicating logically and persuading others through the use of reasoned arguments. Katharine Eisaman Maus has argued that tropological thinking defines Tarquin's and Lucrece's communicative acts, for upon discovering that reason is not amenable to their desires, they employ rhetorical figures to alter reality to suit those desires. The rapist's failure to heed his victim's words, and the inability of both parties to respond adequately to the other's speech, is therefore both a critique of tyranny and an indicator of the "obtrusiveness and unreliability of language."[26] If the rhetorical arts do not in fact persuade because of the inherent incommensurability of language and meaning, then the humanist reliance upon counsel as a device for restraining monarchs is rendered suspect. Tarquin is compelled finally to listen to Lucrece only after she is dead and Brutus has incited the Roman people against the monarchy. This suggests that princes are not ultimately restrained by words, whose unreliability makes them susceptible to tropological thinking, but by the threat of violence that stands behind language. Unable to materialize the threat of violence while she pleads with Tarquin alone in her bedroom, Lucrece must employ violence against her own person to make her words convey a meaning that he finally finds persuasive, as he is forced to flee from Rome, his family deprived of all its authority and influence.

A case for leaning into physicality. Perhaps w/ Helena when she is caught between Demetrius and Lysander.

The failure of Lucrece's language, then, can be read variously as an admonition to rulers to heed counsel or risk being branded as tyrants, or as a call to reform the political system by transforming the increasingly absolutist kingship of the Tudors into a constitutional monarchy. However, given that Lucrece's only felicitous speech act occurs when her body is paraded through the marketplace, a more radical reading suggests that the poem is not a call for reform but a call to arms, reminding Shake-

speare's audience that violence is finally the most persuasive of the rhetorical arts. Yet, despite the political revolution to which the poem gestures by the very nature of its subject matter, one of the most striking and notable attributes of Livy's tale is that Tarquin does not physically overpower Lucrece and force her to have sex with him, but instead perpetrates his rape through an elaborate rhetorical ploy.[27] Livy notes that Tarquin's sword is already drawn as he approaches Lucrece's bed, revealing that he intends to conquer her through the threat of physical violence. Nevertheless, he "plead[s]" with her to yield, as if he needs her to mimic genuine desire for his own desire to achieve its proper end.[28] After Lucrece rejects his advances and makes it clear that she will not have intercourse willingly, Tarquin threatens to rape her and then cover up his act by killing her along with a servant, whom he will claim to have discovered in her bed. Rather than force himself upon her physically, he concocts a plan that allows him to simulate consensual sex with Lucrece, perpetuating the fiction that she is not compelled but submits voluntarily to him. Although she attempts to dissuade him with words, resisting his assault verbally, he structures the act in such a way that her body will appear to have yielded to male desire, either his own or that of a servant. Tarquin manufactures consent by forcing Lucrece to engage with him through the medium of the signifier. It does not matter if Lucrece actually withholds consent because Tarquin has devised a scenario that renders the distinction between resistance and acquiescence insignificant; regardless of her choice, she will appear to have violated her marriage oath and betrayed her husband.

In his much commented upon discussion of this famous episode in Roman history, Saint Augustine observes that Lucrece had perhaps not been entirely unwilling and that her consent was more elicited than compelled.[29] Though Lucrece appears to accede to Tarquin's wishes because of her deep-seated fear that he will publish her shame, according to Augustine, she need not have felt any shame if the act were indeed against her will because then she would not have sinned. But as Berry has suggested, what this reading overlooks is that Lucrece is not a passive victim in this scenario but instead assumes linguistic agency in response to Tarquin's assault.[30] In order to speak, however, she has to allow herself to be victimized, to be degraded and humiliated sexually, for only by surviving her ordeal can she acquire the enunciatory capacity that will allow her to actualize her vengeance. In Shakespeare's version of the story, Lucrece attempts at length

Hermia has to go through a similar scenario. Would Lysander have been able to see her if she hadn't gone into public for her trial.

to dissuade Tarquin from assaulting her, but in Livy's narrative, Lucrece does not speak at all before the act, only afterward when confronting her family with what has transpired.[31] She must allow herself to be raped in her own bed to acquire a voice—and even then it is a voice that can gain effectiveness only through her male kin, who swear to avenge her wrongs because her body has survived as a flesh and blood monument to the violation she has suffered. The same body whose chastity had first captured Tarquin's desire in the full complexity of its multiple significations has to appear mangled and defiled for the masculinized power structure to divide against itself in a way that empowers her kin to strike at their overlord.

Similarly to how Titania and Oberon don't have a balanced conversation until after Titania has had the antidote.

As an instrument of patriarchal control and coercion, rape abjects the victim by subjecting her absolutely to the will of the oppressor and transforming her from a person in her own right into an object intended only for the pleasure of another person. This is the most extreme form of tyranny. In Livy's version of the tale, however, the emphasis is not on the rape but on its aftermath, indicating that the desubjectifying effects of sexual violation are not limited to the victim but extend as well to her husband and male kin. Previously she had existed for their personhood, and had contributed to their *Romanitas*, or "Roman-ness," by maintaining the integrity of the household, from which their power has developed and upon which it still depends. In Shakespeare's poem, Lucrece's interaction with her family, when she reveals what has transpired and swears them to revenge, is much abbreviated in comparison to the bedroom scene, in which she engages in an extended dialogue with Tarquin. This inversion of Livy's narrative emphasizes the process through which the rape occurred rather than its consequences. Livy's Lucrece survives her ordeal so that she might exercise control one last time from the place in which she has been authorized to do so: the household. Although Livy never shows her acting outside the home, the oath she enacts extends beyond the boundary of the private into the public sphere, the preserve of patrician power and right. This intrusion into masculine space is enabled by the tyrant's violation of the household and his illegitimate and perverse assumption of paterfamilial authority. Rather than subjecting the feminine to his will for the benefit and honor of his subjects, which would be an appropriately patriarchal exercise of power, Tarquin acts as mock-paterfamilias, placing the members of the household under his control for no reason other than satisfying his lust. That Tarquin does not simply assault Lucrece but instead concocts

This principle could be taken and applied to any of the women in Midsummer.

Bureaucracy and the System over the Individual. We see this in the first scene of Midsummer.

a plan in which she will seem to have had sexual relations with a slave reveals the extent to which his tyranny enacts an inversion of patriarchal authority. Rather than supervise the servants and assign them appropriate roles, Tarquin mockingly elevates the servant to the place of his master in Lucrece's bed and then himself assumes the role of patriarch by claiming the right to execute both the servant and his "mistress"—the double resonance of "mistress" indicating the two female subject positions that the rape collapses into one another.[32]

Lucrece's response to Tarquin's simulation of paterfamilial authority is to play the role assigned to her, that of the obedient wife who acquiesces to her husband's desire. This is the role she has always played in relation to Collatine, but now she plays it not for his benefit but for her own. Although Livy leaves her motives unclear, and, as we have seen, Augustine implies that she experiences sexual pleasure while being raped, if we take Lucrece at her word, then it is clear that she agrees to perform the role of sexually available wife in order to serve her own ends rather than those of the patriarchy. She satisfies Tarquin's lust not out of subservience but in order to take his life. Of course, she cannot do this by herself but instead must engage her family to perform the actual deed. By making them swear not to let her violation go unavenged, she turns them into agents who enact her will from beyond the grave. As such, Lucrece transforms her death into an assertion of her living will. The ostensible reason for her suicide is that she does not want to remain alive with the stain of having been violated and that she desires to redeem herself by being an *exemplum* to other women who have similarly been deprived of their chastity.[33] Had she lived, Lucrece would have been forced to accuse Tarquin publically and detail the humiliation and violence she had suffered at his hands. Her case would have been adjudicated through the law, a contingent, human invention that could be manipulated by the tyrant in the same way he had attempted to manipulate her. By exacting an oath of vengeance from her kin and then immediately killing herself, Lucrece removes her case from the contingent sphere of the political and places it in the hands of the gods. Her kin are now sworn to avenge her, and this oath has been made not just to her but to the heavenly powers, whose authority it would be impiety to contravene. Lucrece's suicide thus ratifies her agency not by eradicating the bodily memorial of her shame but by investing her will with the sovereign power of the gods. She finds her voice in a speech act whose felicity is underwritten by its rhetorical dexterity, exacted from her male kin but guaranteed by its divine addressee.

In Livy's version of the story, Lucrece's rape acquires historical significance through the vow she elicits from her relatives. However, Lucrece does not make them swear to avenge her violation in order to expel kings or change the constitution of Rome. Brutus's use of her body to effect different ends than those she articulates represents another instrumentalization of the feminine, making it serve male desire rather than express a desire of its own. Lucrece's dying wish, that her example might prevent women in the future from disregarding their honor, represents her violation in strictly gendered terms: she hopes that others might not experience shame in the manner that she has. The use of her story as part of a propaganda campaign to force the Tarquins from Rome transforms the gendered terms of her violation into an implicitly male form of political action; by expelling the Tarquins, the Romans were able to recover their self-mastery. Yet this self-mastery extended only to the patricians, who monopolized the authority formerly exercised by kings while still excluding the lower orders and women from any share in their power. Thus, the mésalliance with which Tarquin threatens Lucrece, coupling her with a "slave," "rascal groom," and "hard-favoured groom"—as Shakespeare variously terms her putative lover—is enacted negatively by abjecting these two groups from the place of sovereignty.[34]

Shakespeare draws attention to this mésalliance in a scene involving Lucrece and her servants, a scene that has no precedent in either Livy or any other source, making it all the more telling about the slippery and ambiguous power relations depicted in the poem. When Lucrece calls for a messenger to deliver a letter to Collatine, beseeching him to return home immediately from Ardea, she must confront the male gaze for the first time since having been assaulted by Tarquin the previous night. Until this point, the only person she has encountered is her maid, who, seeing her mistress cry, sheds tears with her, not knowing why Lucrece is upset but responding to her grief with a form of empathy that Shakespeare specifically genders feminine. Seeing "swelling drops" appear in the maid's eyes, Lucrece promptly composes herself and commands the young woman to stop crying, for if "tears could help" rectify the situation, then those that Lucrece had shed would have long ago sufficed (lines 1228 and 1274). Lucrece's instructions to the female servant are what would be expected of a mistress in charge of her household: practical, rational, and appropriately hierarchical. Even in the depths of her trauma, Lucrece is able to compose herself and summon the strength to issue commands to a servant, in a manner appropriate for the *domina* of a Roman household.

Generally this reaction would still be gendered feminine by the masses. Is there a way to play with this? We have a lot of scene work with just Lysander and Demetrius. Something like Lysander breaking down when he first sees Hermia once the spell is removed could have a similar impact.

Livy makes clear that Tarquin's plan to frame Lucrece is so terrifyingly effective not only because her chastity would be violated but also because her household would be subject to pollution. Shakespeare emphasizes that the extent of this pollution is exacerbated by the social inversion entailed in having sexual relations with a lowborn servant, over whom she is supposed to exercise power. When the messenger appears before her, Lucrece immediately quails, imagining that his "steadfast eye" is boring through her, revealing a knowledge of what occurred the previous night (line 1339). As his cheeks crimson, she grows more uncertain, "for Lucrece thought he blushed to see her shame" (line 1344). As the narrator comments, the groom's expression is actually a sign of "bashful innocence" in the presence of his superior, as he listens intently to ensure that he understands the task with which he is being entrusted (line 1341). Even though his manner signifies obedience, Lucrece presumes he has somehow learned about what Tarquin did to her just a few short hours ago, imagining that his dutiful glance is in fact a knowing leer, as if all men were privy to the assault that one of their number had perpetrated against her. That Lucrece is able to assume her role as mistress of the house with her maid so seamlessly, yet cannot bear the look of her male servant, foregrounds the gendered nature of authority. Additionally, it indicates her absolute abjection in the face of male violation, an abjection enacted by what she presumes to be superior masculine knowledge. The emotional response of the female servant momentarily establishes equality between the two women, an equality Lucrece finds so oddly disjunctive that she must immediately assume the position of mastery, indicating that her position as *domina* is a delegated form of authority in which she speaks not in her own voice but through the persona and subject position of her husband. When confronted with a male servant—"one of [her] husband's men"—she is unable to maintain this mastery and instead projects her own feelings of abjection onto the messenger that she herself has summoned (line 1291).

Something else to play with. If by the end of the play we find a moment to give Hippolyta power in some way, or show Helena's strength as the most sound minded of the lovers.

Lucrece's discomfiture when confronted with the male gaze registers how this misrecognition collapses class and gender relations into one another in Shakespeare's narrative. According to the annalistic tradition articulated by Livy, the rape gives birth to the republic when Brutus displays Lucrece's lifeless body in the forum at Collatia, and then, after whipping the populace into a fury, marches on Rome with an army of the people. At first the Romans are panic-stricken, but when they see the patricians leading the angry mob, they open the gates and rush to the forum,

where Brutus gives a speech denouncing Tarquin's oppressive rule. He reminds the crowd that under this arrogant king, they were reduced to the status of slaves and forced to perform the most wretched forms of labor, such as cleaning sewers and ditches. "The men of Rome," he bitterly observes, "conquerors of all the nations round about, [have] been transformed from warriors into artisans and stone-cutters."[35] Brutus's speech is designed to inflame the populace by having them recognize their own oppression in the mutilated and defiled body of Lucrece. The ultimate signifier of tyranny, the bloody corpse, temporarily eradicates the distinctions among patricians and plebeians, fusing them into a single body of the "people," the collective entity under whose authority the republic will be founded. This new political body that comes into being through Brutus's rhetoric collapses the people's own abjection into that of Lucrece, who was violated not only in her own house but also in her own bed, just as they have been violated in the city their ancestors created.

The birth of the republic concludes the first book of Livy's history, and the remaining books of the first decade detail the process by which this masculine power-sharing arrangement is gradually broadened to include the wealthy plebeians, while the remainder of the populace is effectively excluded from official positions in the state. The people come into being as a revolutionary force that expels the Tarquins and enables the birth of a new constitutional entity—the *res publica*, or people's "thing"—and are then relegated to the margins of the public arena. The republic takes the place of the child that might have resulted from Tarquin's rape of Lucrece. His assault represents an impermissible form of intercourse capable of being redeemed only by having Lucrece give birth to a new form of the political, an eternal and idealized child, replacing the monstrosity that perhaps was alive within her. The physical child would have had a mixed constitution with a combination of the blood of the tyrant and the violated woman destined to be the mother of the republic. To foreclose this possibility, Lucrece must die before Tarquin's child might be born, sacrificing herself so that her idealized, political progeny might live. That Brutus plays the female role of midwife to the republic indicates the extent to which the tyrant's illicit desire has subverted patriarchal ideology. Ruling to satisfy his own pleasure, Tarquin eviscerates Roman masculinity by rendering patricians incapable of exercising mastery over themselves or their women.

As Livy's subsequent account of Roman politics makes clear, the consul embodies a form of power that all patricians may

share, for the defining characteristic of the citizen is that he both rules and is ruled. Upon becoming consul, the citizen is granted authority over other men, extending the power he exercised as paterfamilias to include free males rather than just his dependents.[36] This extension of patriarchal authority is permissible because it is temporary, the consul serving for only a year, after which he must divest himself of the magistracy and submit to another man. Liberty is thereby rendered compatible with submission.[37] By acquiescing to the consul, the paterfamilias does not become less than male—as Brutus had when feigning incompetence—because the consul's power is his own. The secret of citizenship is that it allows men to maintain mastery—over themselves, women, and servants—by sharing power in a closed system that demarcates the boundary between the paterfamilias and those subject to his authority. Tarquin's transgression had exposed the insufficiency of the patricians, whose masculine *potestas* was ultimately delegated rather than autotelic, exercised on behalf of and at the pleasure of the ruler rather than to further their self-sufficiency. This transgression revealed the emasculating nature of tyranny, which Tarquin had previously obscured by personal power-sharing, in which the servitude of his male companions was made palatable by being reconfigured as friendship. This ruse lasted until the tyrant betrayed one of his companions and revealed that the relationship was predicated upon the subordination of their manhood to his desire.

The rape of Lucrece, then, was not simply a violation of male proprietorship—the right of Collatine to control his wife—but a disruption of the mystified relations upon which monarchy is predicated. These relations are necessarily obscured to allow the state to operate, but the rape of Lucrece transformed the monarchy into tyranny, or rather, revealed that which it had always already been—a system premised upon the delegation of masculine authority from the king to his friends. Livy briefly describes the male camaraderie that led to the fateful contest about who possessed the most perfect wife, but Shakespeare, perhaps borrowing from Ovid, develops this scene in detail, emphasizing how Collatine's need to compete with Tarquin initiated the train of events that led to his wife's rape and suicide. Joel Fineman has drawn attention to how the poem posits an "originary time of ideal and specifically visual 'delight,'" in which Tarquin, Collatine, and their other male companions enjoyed an "initial happiness" while bonded together in placing Ardea under siege. "'The treasure of his happy state,'" Fineman observes, functions "as a primal

shining moment in the past to which the poem's present-tense narrative now remembers back as [an] absolute beginning of the diegetic story."[38] This absolute beginning must be reimagined so that it can be reproduced through the trauma that is the poem's central concern. Lucrece is sacrificed to allow male camaraderie-in-arms to be created anew, not only as a force of resistance that generates the popular body in opposition to the tyrant, but also as a self-authorizing *res publica* that unites the patricians as a ruling class.

Although Shakespeare does not depict the revolution that follows Lucrece's rape, the poem does portray the male group formation that serves as a necessary precondition for the establishment of the republic. Nancy Vickers has pointed to the circular movement enacted by Shakespeare's narrative, observing that the "poem closes as it opened, as men rhetorically compete with each other over Lucrece's body."[39] Collatine destroys his initial happiness by proclaiming the great beauty of his rich "jewel" (line 34), allowing others to penetrate, through the medium of his rhetoric, the household interior and visualize that which belongs to him by masculine right. This visual rhetoric turns Lucrece into an object of desire through which her husband asserts superiority over his companions. But as Vickers notes, by describing Lucrece in such superlative terms, he is guilty of "usurping royal prerogative" because no one should possess a richer jewel than the king.[40] In publishing his wife's beauty, Collatine threatens the phallic domination Tarquin exercises over other men and upon which his sovereignty depends. The public nature of the speech act challenges the tyrant's position of mastery by implicitly representing him as lacking that which all men desire but Collatine alone possesses. To reassert control, Tarquin must either appropriate Lucrece himself or destroy the chaste beauty that makes her "so rich a thing" (line 39).

A given circumstance in the worlds of our play.

As Vickers notes, at the conclusion of the poem the contest between Lucretius and Collatine over who has suffered most from Lucrece's death invokes the earlier competition among Tarquin and his companions. At Ardea, Collatine had sought to inflate his ego by rhetorically displaying his "peerless dame" to the other men (line 21). Kneeling beside her bloody corpse, he attempts to prop up his ego by demonstrating that his loss is greater than that of Lucretius. Collatine and Lucretius, as Lucrece's husband and father, respectively, embody patriarchal authority in their persons, but rather than take steps to avenge her dishonor, they engage in an excessive display of emotion, lamenting with tears

and other corporeal signs the great loss they have suffered. In lugubriously focusing on how her death affects them, the two men act in a self-indulgent, narcissistic manner that is sharply differentiated from Brutus's more controlled and purposeful reaction to the tragedy. While Lucretius and Collatine are expressing grief for the woman they have loved and lost, the poem emphasizes her body lying in a pool of its own blood, with the narrator drawing attention to how Collatine "falls" by her side and bending down "bathes" his face in "Lucrece' bleeding stream" (lines 1774–5). In contrast, once Brutus "pluck[s] the knife from Lucrece' side," symbolically withdrawing the phallic instrument that did the work that Tarquin was incapable of performing, her body is not mentioned again (line 1807). Rather, the attention shifts to the "fatal knife" by which the men vow to see justice executed (line 1843). To consecrate this vow, they all "jointly" bow their knees to the ground, swearing to revenge the outrage perpetrated against Lucrece (line 1846). The task of bringing Tarquin to justice will not fall on Collatine alone but instead will become the sacred duty of the reconstituted band of brothers that kneels over Lucrece. They kneel in solidarity with one another, not in lamentation or in an effeminate weeping contest, as had been the case previously, but rather, bonded together as a masculine social order determined to regain the power ceded to Tarquin and the whole line of kings.

Puck's flower could be view this way for Oberon.

The tyranny of the Tarquins, crystallized in the rape of Lucrece, dissolves the allegiance the patrician order owes to the throne and restores sovereignty to the household. This sovereignty is no longer lodged in Collatine or Lucretius but in the male members acting as a collective body. The poem drives home this point by referring to those who accompany Collatine as "his consorted lords," suggesting that they are his men and bound to avenge any injury done to him (line 1609). When Lucrece addresses her husband's followers as "[k]nights," she not only reinforces the feudal nature of their relationship but also usurps her lord's place by demanding that his men pledge themselves directly to her (line 1694). Although the knights readily accede to her request, the fact that she rather than Collatine solicits their aid demonstrates the inversion of household authority affected by Tarquin's usurping violence. When this authority is reestablished by the male body acting collectively, Lucrece's illegitimate appropriation of male lordship is symbolically reversed through a second vow the men take together. This second vow is described in elaborate detail in the poem, functioning as a ceremonial act of closure. After Brutus pulls the knife from Lucrece's side, he swears the following:

Is this the case for our story.

> Now by the Capitol that we adore,
> And by this chaste blood so unjustly stainèd,
> By heaven's fair sun that breeds the fat earth's store,
> By all our country rights in Rome maintainèd,
> And by chaste Lucrece' soul that late complainèd
> Her wrongs to us, and by this bloody knife,
> We will revenge the death of this true wife.
> (lines 1835–41)

Although twice mentioning Lucrece and her violated chastity, Brutus also swears revenge by the capitol and the rights of Rome, indicating that bringing Tarquin to justice is not merely a matter of personal honor but a constitutional duty. The symbolic reversal enacted by this second vow is made manifest when he demands that the consorted lords also swear: "And that deep vow which Brutus made before / He doth again repeat, and that they swore" (lines 1847–8). The vow made to Lucrece is clearly not sufficient but must be repeated in a different register, transforming Tarquin's exile from simple revenge into a political act justified by Roman law and religion. Lucrece has been violated physically by Tarquin, but the men have also been violated, not only by the tyrant but also by Lucrece herself, as Collatine makes clear as he stands over her mutilated body, "She was my wife: / I owed her, and 'tis mine that she hath killed" (lines 1802–3). Lucrece lacked the authority to commit suicide, according to Collatine, because she did not "own" herself but instead belonged to him. Collatine views himself as having been doubly violated: once by the man who invaded his bed and once by the woman who appropriated his right of possession over her body. Rather than preserve the sanctity of the household, her suicide reveals the extent to which husbands and fathers have lost control of their own internal realms in which neither their sovereignty nor their proprietary rights are respected. The vow Brutus exacts from the consorted lords reinvigorates the fraternal bonds that have been disrupted by the tyrant's appropriation of masculine *imperium*, but the household is not restored to its originary position as the locus of power. Instead, power is now diffused among all those capable of exercising self-mastery. Brutus exemplifies this new regime by having transformed himself from a "brute," incapable of exercising rational constraint or self-governance, into a man who rules others because he has exhibited the ability to rule himself.

Rome was founded through an act of divine violence when Rhea Silvius was raped by the god Mars and gave birth to the

famous brothers Romulus and Remus.[41] The rape of Lucrece reiterates the assault of Rhea but transforms the rapist from a god into a man. The violence perpetuated against Lucrece is not divinely ordained but rather a human act. Much like the creation of the republic itself, the significance of Tarquin's brutal assault will be determined by how men respond to it. In Livy's narrative, Collatine is excluded from the new state formed in the aftermath of his wife's rape because he was kin to the tyrant, and the Romans so hated the name of Tarquin that he was not permitted to remain in the city. The irrationality of this exclusion foreshadows the troubles that will arise in the subsequent history of Rome as the people acquire agency and assert their political will. By transforming this exile into an internal exclusion from a leadership position in the new fraternal order, Shakespeare displaces irrationality onto the council that takes upon itself the task of forming a new state. Like the Bond of Association by which Englishmen swore to avenge Elizabeth's death, the council comes into being through the vow that the men swear while Brutus holds the knife with which Lucrece killed herself. As Bal has argued, the vow is a special type of speech act that "modifies the real" by projecting a different state of affairs that it alone has the capacity to realize.[42] The vow that Brutus and the consorted lords swear not only modifies reality by enunciating the future but also transforms the earlier vow that Lucrece had forced them to swear on her behalf. The knife with which she had sealed that initial vow is changed from an instrument of female agency, through which Lucrece had imposed her will upon the male members of the household, into a phallic signifier through which the fully incorporated, militarized state foretold by Mars's rape of Rhea will finally be realized.

Shakespeare's reformulation of the vow sworn by Brutus reveals how the preoccupations of republicanism are represented in gendered and highly sexualized terms in *Lucrece*. The primary tenet of republicanism is that the governed must consent to the laws by which they are ruled. However, in Lucrece's encounter with Tarquin, consent becomes a charged and multivalent medium through which the exchanges between different persons and subject positions are negotiated. Likewise, the idea that the commonwealth is created through an agreement among those subject to its authority is problematized by the manner in which the vow enacts the political in Shakespeare's text. To form the masculinized incorporative body that will effect a revolution by expelling the Tarquins, Lucrece must be sacrificed and the violated female body substituted for her speech acts, as the perlocution-

ary promise elicited from the household knights to revenge her violation is superseded by their own vow to reclaim the *patria* for themselves.

Rome is not the only nation or people that traces its origin to an act of rape or sexual assault. King Arthur was conceived when his father, Uther Pendragon, tricked the Duchess of Cornwall into having sex by magically impersonating her husband, who unbeknownst to her had died an hour earlier on the battlefield.[43] Even the conception of Jesus required that his virginal mother be impregnated by an act of holy violation in which a spirit penetrates her body. These examples—and they could easily be multiplied—raise the question of why rape is so often a constituent element in national and popular mythographies. I think part of the explanation is that the heroic founder of a people, religion, or political state must be marked as special or different from those over whom he exercises power or influence. Being conceived through an illicit sexual act immediately grants the founder this status. But even more importantly, rape eliminates female will and agency from the conception of the child destined to rule or be a lawgiver to others. The state or people are thus formed entirely in the father's image through a violent act of androgenesis in which the woman has no active role, a point emphasized by Lucrece's seemingly passive acquiescence to Tarquin's lust. The child conceived through a rape may therefore be viewed as an almost entirely male creation in which the womb of the woman is seized as a conquered territory. The child that Lucrece brings forth is the republic itself and the masculinized act of creation is foregrounded not just in the manner through which Tarquin structures the assault as a consensual act but also in the way that Brutus plays midwife to the new state. Even though Lucrece is the medium through which the republic is born, both she and other women are excluded from the vow by which it comes into being. When Mary asks Jesus for wine during the wedding at Cana, he answers in a way that perfectly encapsulates the masculine dynamic of republicanism; "Woman, what have I to do with thee?"[44] As with the newly conceived republic, the *patria potestas* defines Christ's existence, granting him an identity apart from the woman whose body gave him life. I am not claiming that Shakespeare was cryptically rewriting the gospel in *Lucrece*, but I am suggesting that republicanism and the reinvigorated godliness that played such an important role in Tudor and Stuart politics share a gendered vision of coercion and consent that Shakespeare's text both foregrounds and calls into question.

NOTES

[1] Patrick Collinson develops the theory that England was a monarchical republic in two important essays—"*De Republica Anglorum*: Or, History with the Politics Put Back" and "The Monarchical Republic of Queen Elizabeth I"—both of which are reprinted in his *Elizabethan Essays* (London: Hambledon Press, 1994), pp. 1–29 and 31–57. Collinson's views are further developed and, to a certain extent, critiqued in John F. McDiarmid, ed., *The Monarchical Republic of Early Modern England: Essays in Response to Patrick Collinson* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007).

[2] Collinson, "*De Republica Anglorum*," pp. 23–5; and "The Monarchical Republic," pp. 32–4.

[3] Collinson, "*De Republica Anglorum*," pp. 21–2.

[4] Collinson, "The Monarchical Republic," p. 36.

[5] Collinson, "*De Republica Anglorum*," p. 19.

[6] Andrew Hadfield, *Shakespeare and Republicanism* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2005); Patrick Cheney, *Marlowe's Republican Authorship: Lucan, Liberty, and the Sublime* (New York: Palgrave, 2009).

[7] I focus on Rome as model for republicanism, but Venice was also an important model, especially in regard to how commerce was related to classical notions of political virtue. For the "myth" of Venice, see J. G. A. Pocock, "Giannotti and Contarini: Venice as Concept and as Myth," chap. 9 in *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1975), pp. 272–330. See also David C. McPherson, *Shakespeare, Jonson, and the Myth of Venice* (Newark: Univ. of Delaware Press, 1990). In regard to Shakespeare's use of Venice, Henry S. Turner examines how republican discourse reconstituted the idea of classical friendship articulated by Aristotle and Cicero in terms of political and economic self-interest ("The Problem of the More-than-One: Friendship, Calculation, and Political Association in *The Merchant of Venice*," *SQ* 57, 4 [Winter 2006]: 413–42).

[8] Hadfield, p. 13.

[9] Cheney, pp. 9–12.

[10] Tracey Sedinger, "Sidney's *New Arcadia* and the Decay of Protestant Republicanism," *SEL* 47, 1 (Winter 2007): 57–77; Debora Shuger, "Castigating Livy: The Rape of Lucretia and *The Old Arcadia*," *RQ* 51, 2 (Summer 1998): 526–48.

[11] Shuger, pp. 531–3 and 539–45.

[12] Some uncertainty exists about the exact source Shakespeare used for his poem, whether it was Livy's Latin version of the tale or the loose translation of Livy in William Painter's *The Palace of Pleasure* (1575). I will quote from Livy, *History of Rome: Books I–II*, vol. 1 of *Livy in Fourteen Volumes*, trans. B. O. Foster, 14 vols. (London: William Heinemann, 1919), pp. 197–209; and William Painter, *The Palace of Pleasure*, 2d edn. (1575), rprt. Joseph Jacobs, 4th edn., 3 vols. (London: Ballantyne Press, 1890), 1: 22–5. It is also possible that Shakespeare drew from Ovid's version in the *Fasti*. The best discussion of these issues is T. W. Baldwin, "The Literary Genetics of *Lucrece*," part 2 in *On the Literary Genetics of Shakspere's Poems and Sonnets* (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1950), pp. 97–153.

[13] The history of Rome's transition from monarchy to republic has been reconstructed in T. J. Cornell, "The Beginnings of the Roman Republic," chap. 9 in *The Beginnings of Rome: Italy and Rome from the Bronze Age to the Punic Wars (c. 1000–264 BC)* (New York: Routledge, 1995), pp. 215–39. See also, Gary Forsythe, *A Critical History of Early Rome: From Prehistory to the First Punic War* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 2005), pp. 82–97.

[14] The best discussion of how Livy represents the transition to republicanism is Gary B. Miles, *Livy: Reconstructing Early Rome* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1995), pp. 102–9 and 120–4.

[15] A. N. McLaren focuses primarily on biblical rather than Roman models. See *Political Culture in the Reign of Elizabeth I: Queen and Commonwealth, 1558–1585* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1999), pp. 2–7.

[16] For a discussion of how the abundant use of rhetorical figures has shaped critical response to the poem, see Heather Dubrow, *Captive Victors: Shakespeare's Narrative Poems and Sonnets* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1987), pp. 15–9.

[17] Coppélia Kahn, "The Rape in Shakespeare's *Lucrece*," *ShakS* 9 (1976): 45–72.

[18] Philippa Berry, "Woman, Language, and History in *The Rape of Lucrece*," *ShS* 44 (1992): 33–9.

[19] Amy Greenstadt, "'Read It in Me': The Author's Will in *Lucrece*," *SQ* 57, 1 (Spring 2006): 45–70.

[20] Kahn, p. 58.

[21] Mieke Bal, "The Rape of Narrative and the Narrative of Rape: Speech Acts and Body Language in Judges," in *Literature and the Body: Essays on Populations and Persons*, ed. Elaine Scarry (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1988), pp. 1–32.

[22] On the conflict between the patricians and plebeians, see Cornell, pp. 245–71.

[23] Hadfield, p. 141.

[24] Hadfield, pp. 130–53.

[25] Colin Burrow, introduction to Shakespeare, *The Complete Sonnets and Poems*, ed. Burrow (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2008), pp. 1–158, 52.

[26] Katharine Eisaman Maus, "Taking Tropes Seriously: Language and Violence in Shakespeare's *Rape of Lucrece*," *SQ* 37, 1 (Spring 1986): 66–82, 82.

[27] The Roman legal definitions of rape and sexual assault are traced in Diana C. Moses, "Livy's Lucretia and the Validity of Coerced Consent in Roman Law," in *Consent and Coercion to Sex and Marriage in Ancient and Medieval Societies*, ed. Angeliki E. Laiou (Washington DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 1993), pp. 39–82.

[28] Livy, p. 201.

[29] Augustine, *The City of God* (1467), trans. Henry Bettenson, ed. David Knowles (London: Penguin, 1972), pp. 27–32. For the influence of Augustine's reading and its relationship to the reception history of Lucrece's tale, see Stephanie H. Jed, *Chaste Thinking: The Rape of Lucretia and the Birth of Humanism* (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1989), esp. pp. 3–4.

[30] Berry, pp. 34–5.

[31] She also does not speak in Ovid's version of the tale, which is significant, given his proclivity for granting female victims a voice (*Ovid's Fasti*, trans. James George Frazer [London: William Heinemann, 1931], pp. 107–19).

[32] For the different forms of authority exercised by the Roman patriarch or paterfamilias, see Forsythe, pp. 220–2.

[33] For the importance and function of *exempla* in Livy, see Jane D. Chaplin, *Livy's Exemplary History* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2000).

[34] Shakespeare, *The Rape of Lucrece* (1594), in *The Complete Sonnets and Poems*, pp. 237–338, lines 515, 671, and 1632. All subsequent citations of Shakespeare's *Lucrece* are from this edition and will be cited parenthetically in the text by line number.

[35] Livy, p. 207.

[36] For a discussion of the nature and historical evolution of the authority exercised by consuls, see Richard E. Mitchell, *Patricians and Plebeians: The Origin of the Roman State* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1990), pp. 132–52.

[37] For an analysis of how Livy defines Roman subjectivity in terms of liberty, see Andrew Feldherr, *Spectacle and Society in Livy's "History"* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1998), pp. 194–204.

[38] Joel Fineman, "Shakespeare's *Will*: The Temporality of Rape," *Representations* 20 (Autumn 1987): 25–76, 30.

[39] Nancy Vickers, "'The blazon of sweet beauty's best': Shakespeare's *Lucrece*," in *Shakespeare and the Question of Theory*, ed. Patricia Parker and Geoffrey Hartman (New York: Routledge, 1985), pp. 95–115, 108.

[40] Vickers, p. 102.

[41] For a discussion of the various myths regarding Rome's foundation, including the significance of Rhea Silvius's rape by Mars, see T. P. Wiseman, *Remus: A Roman Myth* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1995), pp. 2 and 52–61.

[42] Bal, p. 12.

[43] Sir Thomas Malory, *The Works of Sir Thomas Malory*, vol. 1, ed. Eugène Vinaver, rev. P. J. C. Field, 3d edn., 3 vols. (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1990), pp. 7–11.

[44] John 2:4 (AV).

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