"No matter: let his mangled body lie". Emblematising Ambivalence in Thomas Heywood's *The Rape of Lucrece*

Tommaso Continisio

Abstract
This paper is concerned with the figure of Tullia, the ambiguous villainous wife to Tarquin the Proud in Thomas Heywood's *The Rape of Lucrece* (1608). Tullia's Machiavellian personality and her ambition to usurp her father's power for the benefit of her husband may be understood as a reaction to her status as a woman in a male-dominated world. Refusing the submissive and domestic role assigned to her by a patriarchal society, she compares herself to the elemental, extra-social forces of air and fire. The play, nevertheless, treats her behaviour as aberrant: having gloried in "masculine" vices, she embraces death in a spirit of quiescent, "feminine" acceptance. The play's Lucrece, Tullia's ostensible opposite, undergoes a parallel transformation, but in reverse. She at first represents the perfect woman and wife of Protestant thought, an impression reinforced by her silence during the episode of the rape. However, she then casts off the role of the passive female victim, displaying masculine qualities of forcefulness and courage while the claims to honour of the characters who are literally male have been utterly dissolved. I argue that the contrasts constructed here are not simply in the interests of structural symmetry, but reflect a deep contradiction in how Rome and the Romans are portrayed both in this play and by other early modern English dramatists.

Key-words: early modern rape, Tullia, masculinity.

Thomas Heywood's *The Rape of Lucrece*, printed in 1608 but probably first performed in 1607 at the new Red Bull playhouse, combines elements of chronicle history (the presentation of moments in the story of the rise of the Roman Republic), comedy (the songs by Valerius) and tragedy (Lucrece's, Brutus's and Sextus Tarquinius's deaths). Among the tragic events narrated in the play, the rape of Lucrece plays a crucial role in the Roman political events, fostering as it does the passage from monarchy to republicanism. This contribution will examine how the narration of the rape is framed

by two other events: one that anticipates, albeit by contrast, Tullia's story, and one – following Lucrece's suicide – which stresses the importance of male bonds. Interestingly, in this play the emphasis is not on the episode of the rape, but on the feminine sphere that is enclosed within a masculine world of war and honour. Given this background, the two women of *The Rape of Lucrece* have to navigate their way in a male-dominated world. This, however, implies a challenge to socio-cultural and religious boundaries, which confine them to a domestic space and deprive them of an assertive attitude – and language.

1. "My father's death gives me a second life": from insubordination to silence

Tullia, who opens Heywood's play with her plot against her father in support of her husband Tarquin the Proud, is an absent figure in other English versions of Lucrece's story, such as Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Legend of Good Women* (c. 1385-87), William Shakespeare's *The Rape of Lucrece* (1594) and Thomas Middleton's *The Ghost of Lucrece* (1600), where she never actually appears. In contrast, Heywood develops her at some length in his version of the story, remaining faithful to his Latin source[1] and highlighting a figure marginally investigated by scholars, who have tended to associate her with Lady Macbeth as a regular attempt to prove Heywood's indebtedness to Shakespeare (Clark 1931; Boas 1950; Kewes 2002).

Tullia embodies the early modern Machiavel, an ambitious and amoral political schemer. As evidenced in the scene of Servius Tullius's murder as well as in the lines that I am going to quote, she shares the features of some Jacobean female tragic protagonists[2]

[1] Livy's *Ab Urbe condita* must be acknowledged as Heywood's primary source for the sub-plot delving into Tullia's character. As for the episode of the rape of Lucrece, Shakespeare provides a possible source with his *Lucrece* for the two additional scenes also present in Heywood's play, and not in Livy's account of the history of Rome. I am referring to the description of Tarquin in the passageway from his room to Lucrece's bedchamber and the meeting with her maid, the latter embellished by Heywood with the episode of Mirable offering Lucrece to play the viol in order to heal her sufferings.

[2] See, for instance, Vittoria Corombona in *The White Devil*, Bianca Capello and Isabella in *Women Beware Women*, and Beatrice-Joanna in *The Changeling*.

who either insensitively delight in their own sins or conceal them, sometimes even from themselves. When the lifeless body of her father lies before her, Tullia glories in the second chance offered by his death: "Tear off the crown, that yet empales the temples / Of our usurping father – quickly, lords / And in the face of his yet bleeding wounds, / Let us receive our honours" (ii.108-11)[3]. Later, when Tarquin informs Tullia that he has forbidden her father's funeral services – in the Roman world, the denial of burial was perceived as a sort of *damnatio memoriae*, intended for criminals and for suicide victims (Kyle 1998: 131) – she simply replies "No matter" (ii.150). Even Tarquin comments on Tullia's rancorous attitude to her father, defining it "unnatural, in thee, my Tullia" (i.40), to which she unemotionally responds: "A kingdom's quest makes sons and fathers foes" (i.42). Later, Tarquin returns to the idea – "Thou show'st thy self in this unnatural strife / An *unkind* daughter" (ii.161-2, emphasis mine) – exploiting the semantic possibilities offered by "unkind" to stress her disloyalty. Thus, Tullia perceives her father's death as a stepping stone to power, and when Servius is killed, she exults: "My father's death gives me a second life / Much better than the first" (ii.98-9). The stage direction, which underlines her callousness, involves a ghastly image: "*As they march, Tullia treads on her father and stays*". When Lucretius remarks on her action, she simply comments: "No matter, let his mangled body lie" (ii.150). This direction clearly suggests that Tullia has trampled on her father's body, which leads to Lucretius's comment that "Your shoe is crimsoned with his vital blood" (ii.149), but the audience will later learn that she has driven over him in her carriage, as in Heywood's classical sources. The fact that she has ridden over him is apparent in many moments throughout the play: for instance, when Horatius remarks that his and his compatriots' revenge on Tullia is justified because "in her pride / In blood paternal her rough coach-wheels dyed" (xx.41-2); or when Brutus himself refers to Tullia as "this monster, this infernal hag, [who made] her unwilling charioteer drive on, / And with his shod wheels crush her father's bones" (iii.10-2), later intensifying the horrible vision with a grotesque detail: "to tread upon her father's

[3] All references to the play are from the online edition of the play edited by Chris Bailey (2009) and available at https://extra.shu.ac.uk/emls/iemls/renplays/rapelucrece/contents.html.

skull; / Sparkle his brains upon her chariot wheel" (vi.121-2). We might therefore suppose that Tullia killed her father by riding over him with her coach and then trod on his dead body later, as a means of celebrating her success or demonstrating her lack of filial feeling; stamping on the dead body of someone one has killed might be seen as a standard gesture – compare, for instance, Apemantus's "I should fear those that dance before me now / Would one day stamp upon me" (Shakespeare and Middleton, *Timon of Athens*, ii.139-40). Whatever the interpretation, by standing over her father's corpse – whether on a horse-driven chariot or trampling on him – Tullia erases the memory of her dead father and that of all the noblemen in the Senate, and by virtually anointing herself with Servius's blood she is interrupting that patrilineal inheritance with a supreme act of inversion of the natural order.

Yet, while Tullia appears utterly resolute from the outset of Heywood's "true Roman tragedy", she is not entirely suited to her role of usurper of paternal power: "To be a queen I long, long, and am sick […] at heart" (i.16), she says as one of her first lines, where the echo of *Hamlet* underlines her discomposure. Linguistically, this is shown in the development of her royal speeches. From the beginning, Tullia consistently refers to herself in the first-person singular, and her first speech shows an inflated attention to her sense of her own self-importance. In the first scene, for example, she uses "I", "my" or "Tullia" eight times in nine lines:

> Be what *I* am not; make thee greater far
> Than thou canst aim to be […].
> And *I* [am] Tullia, what of that?
> What diapason's more in Tarquin's name
> Than in a subject's? or what's *Tullia*
> More in the sound than to become the name
> Of a poor maid or waiting gentlewoman?
> *I* am a princess both by birth and thoughts,
> Yet all's but *Tullia*. There's no resonance
> In a bare style: *my* title bears no breadth,
> Nor hath it any state. Oh me, *I*'m sick! (i.4-14, emphases mine)

The whole scene unfolds with monotonous and repetitive references by Tullia to herself, displaying both her hyper-individualistic nature and a certain brittleness, since she fails to adopt the customary royal "we".

From the second scene – which is set in the Senate – onwards, Tullia starts to perform the part of the queen, investing herself with the crown. She employs the conventions of royal speech more naturally, fluctuating between first-person pronouns, both singular and plural. When addressing Brutus, she remembers the conventions ("Brutus, you trouble *us*", ii.17, emphasis mine) but shortly after, when she is overwhelmed by anger, she discards her regal role and refers to Servius as a "dotard" who is "not *my* father" (ii.85, emphasis mine). Throughout the meeting at the senate, Tullia oscillates between "I" and "we", and "my" and "our", the fluctuation sometimes occurring within the same line: "*We* o'er his trunk may in *our* chariot ride: / For, mounted like a queen, 'twould do *me* good" (ii.153-4, emphases mine). After her father has been killed, she acquires a more refined, exhortatory, royal type of speech, when for example she is talking to her sons to appease their quarrel:

> From our love,
> How happy are we in our issue now,
> When as our sons, e'en with their bloods contend
> To exceed in duty. We accept your zeal. […]
> We do not yet esteem you least in love;
> Ascend and touch our lips. (vi.79-82, 88-9)

This speech is charged with dramatic irony. Gaining the throne fills Tullia with fierce pride, and she declares that her monarchical status has made her like the gods. Consequently, when speaking with her son Sextus Tarquinius, who is invited by his father to reveal "from whence this discord riseth" (vi.79), she combines queenliness with a new note of compassion. Ironically, it is curious that Tullia puts excessive trust in her sons when she has proved to be so heartless towards her father, and the audience is clearly aware that her words have been prompted by the selfish discussion between Aruns and Sextus, each vying to ensure his own place as successor to the throne[4].

[4] In this case Heywood attempts to remain faithful to the classical source material. In Livy's *Ab Urbe condita* we read that Aruns and Sextus, sent by their father, seek counsel from the Oracle at Delphi as to whom would be chosen to ascend the throne. The Oracle responds that Tullia's sins must be atoned for and the one who kisses their mother first will succeed her reign. Both sons plan to "gain a kingdom

Just as she behaved towards her father, they are self-absorbed and eager to take her power for themselves.

In her last speech, Tullia reverts to first-person singular when she finds she is to die after all, as though death were assigning her to the natural place she deserves: "Mercy *I* scorne", and a moment later, "Life *I* despise" (xxiv.34, 39, emphases mine). Her unemotional temperament is even commendable in the "feminine" acceptance of her death (Phillippy 2002), namely in the stoic resoluteness shown when accepting mortality as a solution of life's failures:

> Had *I* the heart to tread upon the bulk
> Of *my* dead father, and to see him slaughtered,
> Only for the love of Tarquin and a crown,
> And shall *I* fear death more than loss of both?
> No, this is Tullia's fame; rather than fly
> From Tarquin, 'mongst a thousand swords she'll die. (xxiv.25-30, emphases mine)

Here, Heywood distances himself from his source. In Livy's account, Tullia's death is not recorded: the historian informs us that "during this confusion Tullia fled from her house, cursed wherever she went by men and women, who called down upon her the furies that avenge the wrongs of kindred" (*History of Rome*, 1.LIX.13, p. 209)[5], thus fleeing in the midst of the revolt, and silent. Heywood's aim is clearly to heighten the presence of his character by lending her nobility in death.

From the cultural viewpoint of early modern England, evil women often conjoined ambition and an insatiable sexual drive, whose frustration led them to madness. There is a suggestion that Tullia's aspiring nature and her pursuit of power are a product of her sexuality (Chernaik 2011: 40), as when she persuades her husband to join the plan to dethrone her father:

---

by a mother's kiss" (v.90), but the misinterpretation of the Oracle will lead Brutus Junior to win, having knelt to kiss mother Earth.

[5] "Inter hunc tumultum Tullia domo profugit exsecrantibus quacumque incedebat invocantibusque parentum furias viris mulieribusque" (p. 208). All the quotations, both in English and in Latin, are taken from the 1919 Loeb edition of Livy's *History of Rome* translated by B.O. Foster.

I am no wife of Tarquin's if not king:
Oh, had Jove made me man, I would have mounted
Above the base tribunals of the earth,
Up to the clouds, for pompous sovereignty.
Thou art a man – oh, bear my royal mind,
Mount heaven, and see if Tullia lag behind. (i.26-31)

Tarquinius Superbus fantasises about this situation, stressing that the senators will "all embrace [his] faction" (i.56). Confident of her power over him, Tullia tantalises her husband with the prospect of sexual gratification: "Now is my Tarquin worthy Tullia's grace, / Since in my arms I thus a king *embrace*" (i.58-9, emphasis mine)[6]. Her sexual allure combines here with her resoluteness. At the beginning Tullia appears more powerful in the Senate than the other counsellors[7]: Tarquin introduces her as our "oracle and, save from [her], / We will admit no counsel" (vi.12-3). She embodies the qualities of the early modern Machiavellian who suggests that Tarquinius Superbus should rule by fear: "Since you gain nothing by the popular love, / Maintain by fear your princedom" (vi.10-1). Indeed, she is sly enough to know that Tarquin and she "must seek some means how to maintain this awe" (vi.31), even if her strength also comes from the conviction that her sons will succeed them in ruling Rome, while Tarquinius Superbus's insecurity is demonstrated in the episode of the Oracle at Delphi. A long break

[6] The sexual innuendo is reinforced here: an embrace perceived as a grip, which sets forth the bond between sex and death, and reminds us of the early modern fear of female sexuality – and of female genitalia, equated with a wound (Hays 1966: 60). Livy pays almost the same attention to Tullia here: Heywood shapes the idea of her "frenzy" (*History of Rome*, I.XLVIII.7, p. 164) and enriches it in his own way.

[7] For the second time, here Heywood strays from Livy. In the classical source Tullia is overshadowed by her husband when he seizes the throne. Livy narrates: "Now began the reign of Lucius Tarquinius, whose conduct procured him the surname of Superbus, or the Proud" (I.XLIX.1, p. 171 – "Inde L. Tarquinius regnare occepit, cui Superbo cognomen facta indiderunt", p. 170), and Tullia is never mentioned afterwards. Therefore, the Machiavellian trait of Tullia's nature is a complete invention by Heywood, as in the source it is Tarquin who rules only by fear ("As he put no trust in the affection of his people, he was compelled to safeguard his authority by fear", I.XLIX.4, p. 173 – "Eo accedebat ut in caritate civium nihil spei reponenti metu regnum tutandum esset", p. 172). Thus, a reversal between the source material and the Jacobean tragedy is worth noticing: the more diaphanous Tullia is in Livy, the more powerful, and Lady Macbeth-like, she is presented as being in Heywood.

occurs in the parricide sub-plot, and the focus then shifts to the episode concerning the dethroning of the Tarquins.

According to the main classical sources, the fall of the Tarquins gives rise to the new Roman Republic. While never placing Tullia in a commendable position, Heywood turns her into a complex villain. Rome needs to be cleansed not only of the Tarquins, but also of Tullia's baleful presence: when the priests appeal to the Oracle, it responds: "Then Rome her ancient honours wins, / When she is purged from Tullia's sins" (v.17-8). Thus, Horatius promises a double revenge, which will destroy "the perpetual tyranny / Of all the Tarquins" and "that monster, / Tullia the Queen" (xix.167-8; 169-70). Following this, we never hear from Tullia again until just before her death. She herself confesses: "there is no earth in me, I am all fire" (i.32); though certainly Tullia is a much more negative character than Shakespeare's Cleopatra, this cannot but be an echo of the Egyptian Queen's death – "I am fire and air" (*Antony and Cleopatra*, V.ii.286). Her hubris seems thus to derive from the denial of the mortality she must confront, and this self-glorification creates an ironic falling short in terms of the reality of her unignorable mortality. In a final effort at superiority, her last lines are scornful and derisory, labelling Collatine a "cuckold" and addressing those who are about to slaughter her as slaves, who will "make this earth divine" (xxiv.43) by killing the sacrificial victim.

In the vast literature on the representation of women in early modern drama, recent criticism is more eager to examine the reasons why they acted as they did and what autonomy this free will may have given them (Haselkorn and Travitsky 1990; Hopkins 2002). Some Jacobean tragic heroines are able to change their lives: despite being subjects in a male-dominated world, they find ways to sidestep the traditional role assigned to them (Haselkorn and Travitsky 1990: 130; Abate 2003: 168). With some of these figures the audience can establish empathic relationships; Tullia, however, never shows a side to which the audience may warm: she is depicted as intrinsically wicked, and, like anyone innately malicious in tragedy, she must die. And so she does. Perhaps it is because of this lack of empathetic appeal that she does not appear in either Shakespeare's or Middleton's poems.

Heywood, who is praised by T.S. Eliot (1932: 106) for his "sympathetic delicacy", here chooses instead gradually to push

Tullia to the margins of the action. Her original conspiracy is forgotten: in the last scene she no longer is its main focus, and one of her final deeds is but a defeated withdrawal – "*Tarquin and Tullia flying, pursued by Brutus*" (xx.0SD). Despite the fact that Heywood's Tullia is such a strong character, she still seems to comply with early modern discourses concerning the dangers of female ambition, thus corroborating the conservative view that women's power must be contained. That is why, towards the end of the play, the playwright reinstates an engendered order by inserting the rise of the Roman Republic. Yet, we still see Tullia's power and loyalty: trying to adjust, in the end, to the feminine role of wife, she despises death and supports her husband until their end. In spite of this, if we may metaphorically recall the way of her father's death, Tullia's reputation will, nevertheless, be annihilated under the wheels of the new Republic.

2. "I hope my Collatine will not so leave his Lucrece": from silence to insubordination

One way of explaining Heywood's insertion of Tullia in *The Rape of Lucrece* might be his desire to convey the heterogeneousness of women and to contribute to the debate concerning their nature and their place in society[8] – a topic which the playwright had already explored in *A Woman Killed with Kindness* (1603) and to which he would return in *Gynaikeion* (1624) and *A Curtaine Lecture* (1637). Another explanation could be that he aims to reflect on the legitimacy of monarchy as a political institution (Zaller 2007; Streete 2009) and on the blurred boundary between moral rule and tyranny (Condren 2006). Actually, the inclusion of Tullia in Heywood's Roman play highlights that one woman's faults must not be the reason for blaming the sex as a whole – for this reason, the playwright has placed Tullia as a foil to Lucrece, who stands as a model of virtue and chastity. Thus, besides a mere symmetrical balance, Tullia may more symbolically serve the purpose of emblematising the ambivalence with which early modern England viewed ancient Rome, and of stressing the

[8] Dusinberre 1975; Jardine 1983; McEachern 1988; Callaghan 1989; McLuskie 1992; Roberts 2002; Flather 2007; Kusunoki 2015.

dichotomy related to its rich, varied and contradictory view of the Roman world.

During the English Renaissance, Rome was considered on the one hand the perfect paradigm of order and civic values; on the other, it was felt to be the clear representation of political disharmony and power struggle, as a multifaceted element embracing opposite notions of chaos and order (Broude 1970: 27-8; Cantor 1976: 17; Kranz 1982: 377-8; Miola 1983: 10). This is poignantly summarised by Clifford J. Ronan (1995: 152):

> The Rome idea of Tudor-Stuart England is a metaphoric cluster of ambivalent motifs that have driven – and complicated – Western life for half a millennium […]. Rome and her citizens represented power, puissance, *rhomé*, though Rome and Romans could also figure forth loss and emptiness. The Roman thus conceived was as much an animal, and devil, as anyone else, but advanced above the rest of mankind by the arts.

In Heywood's tragedy, Tullia, the actual ruler, appears as being the "appetite-driven barbarian" (p. 152), while Lucrece is the *matrona lanifica*, the prototype of nobility and obedience. Ironically, Lucrece, admired for her exemplary qualities, will in the end be the suicide victim, a figure fervently condemned by some English theologians and politicians (MacDonald and Murphy 1990). As we will see later, there is a strange mention of how being virtuous is not enough to live safely. Women are sexualised, even when they are chaste. The idea of Lucrece as the archetypal Roman matron is recurrent throughout the play, as most of her speeches revolve around her virtuous marriage and are imbued with moral platitudes and *sententiae* (Holaday 1950: 41). Yet, noteworthy is her final act of disobedience: she neglects the words of her husband, who told her: "quit thy guilt, for what could Lucrece do / More than a woman?" (xix.119-20), and later, from a Christian viewpoint, she challenges the laws of God by committing self-slaughter. Lucrece's last act of double insubordination is justified by her need to be cleansed of the guilt imposed on her and makes us consider her as someone to be respected for having deemed "her life less than her honoured fame" (xix.143)[9].

[9] Heywood is certainly not interested in representing Lucrece's soul and her loss of

To support our initial hypothesis, Lucretius directly compares the "feminine" virtues of Lucrece to the "masculine" vices in which Tullia has gloried:

I have a daughter, but, I hope, of mettle
Subject to better temperature; should my Lucrece
Be of this pride, these hands should sacrifice
Her blood unto the gods that dwell below;
The abortive brat should not out-live my spleen.
But Lucrece is my daughter, this my queen. (ii.102-7)

As shown in this speech, Lucrece is first introduced by her father's words and depicted as a body prone to being abused: the chastisement suggested for his own daughter, should Lucrece behave like Tullia, highlights her quality as a possible victim, a vulnerable figure, a daughter subjected to her father's caprice. In this, as a woman, Lucrece is immediately linked to the threat of violence.

Heywood continues giving hints of Lucrece's concern with chastity as well as her obsession with honour and reputation[10]: "My reputation" – she declares – "Shall be no shelter to the least intent / Of looseness" (vii.32, 34-5). Her pathological anxiety is apparent later, when she addresses Tarquin against the envisioned rape: "pity, oh pity / The virtues of a woman; mar not that / Cannot be made again" (xv.105-7), adding shortly after: "Behold my tears [...] distilled from the heart" (xv.111-2). Notwithstanding her invocations, a stage direction specifies that Tarquin "*bears her out*" (xv.140SD), thus indicating that her voice fails to persuade. In line with early modern custom, the rape is an unseen act, "an in/visible act of violence", as Kim Solga states (2009: 26): it is not central as in Livy, Ovid and especially in Shakespeare, where the assault is described at length. Her behaviour leaves no room for doubt whether she may have

honour, as Shakespeare is: Heywood's main intent is to interpret the rape in terms of its political, rather than psychological outcome. Perhaps, this has led some critics to disregard this play because it does not present Lucrece as a richly naturalistic character. As Allan Holaday (1950: 38) remarks, the Tarquins and the Roman nobles "usurp the play from Lucrece".

[10] For instance, in *The City of God* Augustine (1998: I.19) finds Lucrece guilty of the sin of pride, as she was a Roman lady "excessively eager for praise".

appreciated that moment[11] adequately to dream of a second chance, because when Sextus Tarquinius asks for a farewell kiss, "*she flings from him and exits*" (xvii.11SD). Nevertheless, there is ambivalence about the relation between her rape and her silence (Robertson and Rose 2001: 217). In early modern drama, this ambiguity is also apparent, for instance, in the bed-trick device, whose deception relies on the silence of the deceiving sexual partner: by the person deceived, the silence is taken to indicate his partner's acquiescence. Thus, in questioning patriarchal gender codes, the only way Lucrece might be allowed to display her real desires would be to forestall the rape by opting for her own death rather than endure dishonour[12], or to preserve her status as victim until death by taking her own life (Donaldson 1982: 23-4). Her silence during the assault is an epistemic breach in the narrative that has to be solved through her final suicide.

In the following scene, as in Shakespeare, Lucrece makes her rape known to Collatine, Brutus and the other Roman nobles, where her father explicitly releases her from any responsibility in the episode. Lucrece's last act, seen by Ian Donaldson (1982: 36) as the necessary conclusion to the possibilities that sprung from her silence, permits her to adhere to masculine values. Her "Roman" suicide is the only choice left to a woman under the gendered honour codes of early modern England, which accused rape victims (both male and female) of connivance with the assailant (Catty 2011). After the rape, Heywood – like Shakespeare and Chaucer – follows once again his classical source material to stress Lucrece's lust for revenge. Livy makes Lucrece speak revengeful words: "But pledge your right hands and your words that the adulterer shall not go unpunished. Sextus Tarquinius is he that last night returned hostility for hospitality, and armed with force brought ruin on me, and on himself no less if you are men when he worked his pleasure with

[11] A possible reading of Middleton's *Ghost of Lucrece* may hint at a sort of enjoyment in the sexual encounter between Lucrece and Sextus Tarquinius. Lucrece states: "It bribes the flesh to war against the spirit / With tickling blood must'ring in every vein. / It weans the conscience from her heavenly merit, / Depraving all chaste thoughts […]. / It taints the breath with fire, the brain with blood / And sets a devil where a god had stood" (ll. 423-9).

[12] But, as in Shakespeare's *Lucrece*, "the shame of being found dead with a slave would be a fate worse than rape" (Ritscher 2009: 48).

me" (1.LVIII.8, p. 203)[13]. Also Shakespeare, who only introduces Lucrece to the audience when Sextus Tarquinius is preparing to violate her, presents her as a character longing for revenge: "That he [Collatine] may vow in this sad hour of mine / Revenge on him that made me stop my breath" (Shakespeare, *Lucrece*, ll. 1179-80). The specific lines devoted by Heywood to Lucrece's desire of revenge are even fewer in number[14]: "Ere I speak my woe, / Swear you'll revenge poor Lucrece on her foe" (xix.73-4). The only theatrical conclusion allowed to someone whose life has revolved around uxorial duties is self-slaughter. Only Middleton sees Lucrece as an agent of her own revenge. In his *Ghost of Lucrece*, the playwright prepares the stage for a more mystical and ghastly performance of Lucrece's story. Middleton's Lucrece takes revenge into her own hands and exerts power through her own speech:

Tarquin the prince: sham'st thou to hear thy name? […]
Tarquin the prince: lo, I'll repeat thy shame […].
I'll shame you both before my shame be done.
Tarquin the prince, Tarquin the Roman heir:
Thus will I haunt and haunt you to despair. (Middleton, *The Ghost of Lucrece*, ll. 178-84)

Differently from Shakespeare's – and from Heywood's, where the story of the raped body is metatheatrically conveyed through the songs[15] by Valerius – Middleton's Lucrece needs no Brutus to proclaim her tragedy.

3. Staging traumatised masculinity

Despite its title, the myth of the birth of the Roman Republic is the essential core of Heywood's *Rape of Lucrece*, where the involvement of the Roman nobles in creating a perverse form of government has

[13] "Sed date dexteras fidemque haud impune adultero fore. Sextus est Tarquinius, qui hostis pro hospite priore nocte vi armatus mihi sibique, si vos viri estis, pestiferum hinc abstulit gaudium" (p. 202).
[14] As Paulina Kewes (2002: 247) observes, Heywood "drastically compresses the episode of the rape".
[15] On Valerius's songs, see Moore 1928; Rowland 2010; Bardelmann 2013; Larson and Dunn 2014.

snatched their honour away from them. Furthermore, the ferocity of the rape itself is not the moment when the Roman nobility acknowledges its disreputable lack of authority: as Solga (2009: 29-50) underlines in her chapter on the rehearsing of sexual violence in *Titus Andronicus*, it is the metatheatrical return – in this case, of Lucrece's traumatised body – which ensures a transformation within society. Thus, unlike Shakespeare, Heywood employs the most quoted example of rape in Western literature mainly to explore homosocial bonds (Breitenberg 1996) rather than digging into the inner sphere of the female victim's thoughts.

After the Tarquins have ascended the throne, the Roman nobles convene a consultative meeting on the dictatorship that is now oppressing their lives, consequently accentuating the weaknesses affecting their friendship bonds. In spite of their grievances about Tarquinius Superbus's regency, they had been incapable of offering any opposition or protests. This shift in power both encourages and emphasises numerous pathological visions of masculinity, as both the nobles and the king metaphorically suffer from a supposed or declared impotence. For example, Horatius forecasts that the continuation of the unstable authority of Tarquin will "beget a weak unable impotence" (iv.9) as the Roman allies and colonies rebel against Rome. Lucretius's intrusion in the meeting puts further emphasis on the features of tyranny, then suggesting that they should retire from public life to focus on household governance, as it "breeds safety" (iv.39). Interestingly, the Roman nobles – and particularly Collatine – are able to offer no protection to their families, as their domestic spaces will be misused to threaten virtue and honour. When Collatine arrives, he shifts the discourse to the incapability of men to administer themselves, now that the Tarquins have expelled them from the authority of the state. He is the only Roman who now is able to display any aptitude to govern himself, as stressed in his speech:

Not giddily like Brutus, passionately
Like old Lucretius with his tear-swollen eyes;
Not laughingly like Mutius Scevola,
Nor bluntly like Horatius Cocles here;
[Valerius] has usurped a stranger garb of humour,
Distinct from these in nature every way. (iv.47-52)

He recognises the symptoms of failed masculinity in each of his Roman friends, yet he is not himself an instance of model masculinity in the play. However, the untuned scenario of the Tarquins' tyranny may only be fixed, Brutus avers, through political opposition:

> As you are Romans, and esteem your fame
> More than your lives, all *humorous* toys set off,
> Of madding, singing, smiling, and what else,
> Receive your native valours, be yourselves,
> And join with Brutus in the just revenge
> Of this chaste ravished lady. (xix.127-32, emphasis mine)

After Lucrece's last words – "Then with your *humours* here my grief ends too" (xix.133, emphasis mine) – the only possibility offered is to enact virtue, which will re-establish authority to the state. This restoration of the self entails a recuperation of the state: by re-defining a harmony of the self through proper balance of the humours within themselves, the Romans will be able to return to a fair male-controlled order, symbolised here by Brutus's sword, thus recovering their masculine honour – temporarily stolen by Lucrece – and proving it in battle. The persistent sense of masculine anxiety increases until the final act, when the new patriarchal order is established.

In *The Rape of Lucrece*, the last two scenes of the play show the *renovatio* of the Roman political order from despotic monarchy to righteous Republic. Undeniably, the moments succeeding the disclosure of the rape propose a series of sections that continually accentuate the masculine virtues of the formerly submissive Roman nobles. Both the rape and the suicide of Lucrece newly nourish Roman nobility, whose restoration establishes the state itself. Heywood directly connects the accomplishment of the republican political order to the brilliant demonstrations of Roman virtue by the nobles: bravery (Horatius); stoic resolution (Scævola); craftiness (Brutus). The men recuperate their masculine virtue only because they can sympathise with Lucrece, the victim of ungoverned desire. It is in the possibility of empathy presented with the rape's metatheatrical reoccurrence that the characters can contribute to enacting masculine virtue. Lucrece's self-slaughter, which adheres to masculine values, allows a transformation on the part of the Roman

nobility such that her attempt to recover her honour somewhat pollutes the Roman nobles. This turning in the plot may be brought to an appropriately heroic conclusion (Solga 2009: 31): the play closes with the virtuous patriarchal masculine order strengthened both within the narrative and metatheatrically.

Lucrece's death may be also read from another perspective, namely as the subordination of marriage to male friendship ties; in this case, the close homosocial bonding between Sextus and Collatine. The disintegration of the relationship between Lucrece and Collatine starts when the latter allows his friend close contact with his domestic affairs: as friendship is prioritised (Alston 1995), friends are granted proximity to the private sphere of marriage. In *The Rape of Lucrece*, while rape is the final destruction of the sanctity of marriage, the delivery of the ring by Sextus, the token of a wife's chastity, highlights the blurred boundaries existing between friendship and marriage. As in the case of Desdemona's handkerchief, ironically the ring becomes here a symbol of treachery rather than loyalty, as it presages the disbandment of friendship and marriage.

Despite Lucrece's sacrifice, in the end male homosocial ties are reinforced. Janet Clare (2006: 115) states that Lucrece contributes to inciting Junius Brutus, her father and her husband to depose Tarquin. Without her encouragement, there would be "no revolt and no challenge to tyranny". Moreover, there would be no test of Brutus's faithfulness to Collatine. Lucrece's narration of the rape generates an occasion of sworn fraternity and the enhancement of honourable bonds between men, as they pledge their unity on Brutus's sword. Heywood fosters this perception by having the Tarquins killed and by making Brutus die in the action. In Heywood's play, the addition of the analogous sacrifice by Brutus almost helps undermine Lucrece's, as it reinforces the friend's noble action in dying for obligation, sense of justice and friendship. Lisa Jardine (1996: 131) claims that in Jacobean drama the woman is made "to bear the burden of an irresolvable conflict between competing social modes in early modern life": in this play, these conflicting modes may be identified with friendship and marriage. Heywood emphasises this clash, averring the pre-eminence of male friendship by proposing, on the one hand, wives bound by early modern gender restraints and, on the other, a Roman patriarchy that did not allow

women to achieve any friendship relations in marriage. Heywood makes his stage wives, Tullia and Lucrece, unaware challengers to male friendship, who in the end must sacrifice themselves and their marriages in favour of male politics and male ties.

References

ABATE, CORINNE S., 2003, *Privacy, Domesticity, and Women in Early Modern England*, Ashgate, Aldershot.

AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO, [413-18/420-27 CE] 1998, *The City of God*, trans. R.W. Dyson, C.U.P., Cambridge.

ALSTON, RICHARD, 1995, *Soldier and Society in Roman Egypt: A Social History*, Routledge, London.

BARDELMANN, CLAIRE, 2013, "Valerius' Musical Folly and the Untuning of Politics in Thomas Heywood's Tragedy *The Rape of Lucrece*", *Theta, Théâtre Tudor* X, pp. 153-70.

BOAS, FREDERICK SAMUEL, 1950, *Thomas Heywood*, Williams & Norgate, London.

BREITENBERG, MARK, 1996, *Anxious Masculinity in Early Modern England*, C.U.P., Cambridge.

BROUDE, ROMAN, 1970, "Roman and Goth in *Titus Andronicus*", *Shakespeare Studies* 6, pp. 27-34.

CALLAGHAN, DYMPNA, 1989, *Woman and Gender in Renaissance Tragedy*, Harvester Wheatsheaf, Hemel Hempstead.

CANTOR, PAUL ARTHUR, 1976, *Shakespeare's Rome: Republic and Empire*, Cornell U.P., Ithaca.

CATTY, JOCELYN, 2011, *Writing Rape, Writing Women in Early Modern England: Unbridled Speech*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke.

CHERNAIK, WARREN, 2011, *The Myth of Rome in Shakespeare and His Contemporaries*, C.U.P., Cambridge.

CLARE, JANET, 2006, *Revenge Tragedies of the Renaissance*, Northcote, Tavistock.

CLARK, ARTHUR MELVILLE, 1931, *Thomas Heywood: Playwright and Miscellanist*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford.

CONDREN, CONAL, 2006, *Argument and Authority in Early Modern England*, C.U.P., Cambridge.

DONALDSON, IAN, 1982, *The Rapes of Lucretia: A Myth and Its Transformations*, Clarendon P., Oxford.

DUSINBERRE, JULIET, 1985, *Shakespeare and the Nature of Women*, Macmillan, London.

ELIOT, THOMAS STEARNS, 1932, *Essays on Elizabethan Drama*, Harcourt, Brace, New York.

FLATHER, AMANDA, 2007, *Gender and Space in Early Modern England*, Boydell, Woodbridge.
HASELKORN, ANNE M. and TRAVITSKY, BETTY S. (eds), 1990, *The Renaissance Englishwoman in Print: Counterbalancing the Canon*, U. of Massachusetts P., Amherst.
HAYS, HOFFMAN R., 1966, *The Dangerous Sex: The Myth of Feminine Evil*, Methuen, London.
HEYWOOD, THOMAS, [1608] 2009, *The Rape of Lucrece*, ed. Chris Bailey, MA Thesis, Sheffield Hallam University, https://extra.shu.ac.uk/emls/iemls/renplays/rapelucrece/contents.html.
HODGKIN, KATHARINE, 1990, "Thomas Whythorne and the Problems of Mastery", *History Workshop Journal* 29 (1), pp. 20-41.
HOLADAY, ALLAN, 1950, "Introduction", in Thomas Heywood, *The Rape of Lucrece*, U. of Illinois P., Urbana.
HOPKINS, LISA, 2002, *The Female Hero in English Renaissance Tragedy*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke.
JARDINE, LISA, 1983, *Still Harping on Daughters: Women and Drama in the Age of Shakespeare*, Harvester Wheatsheaf, Hemel Hempstead.
JARDINE, LISA, 1996, *Reading Shakespeare Historically*, Routledge, London.
KEWES, PAULINA, 2002, "Roman History and Early Stuart Drama: Thomas Heywood's *The Rape of Lucrece*", *English Literary Renaissance* 32, pp. 239-67.
KYLE, DONALD G., 1998, *Spectacles of Death in Ancient Rome*, Routledge, London.
KRANZ, DAVID, 1982, "Shakespeare's New Idea of Rome", in Paul A. Ramsey (ed.), *Rome and the Renaissance: The City and the Myth*, Medieval and Renaissance Texts & Studies, Binghamton.
KUSUNOKI, AKIKO, 2015, *Gender and Representations of the Female Subject in Early Modern England*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke.
LARSON, KATHERINE R. and DUNN, LESLIE C. (eds), 2014, *Gender and Song in Early Modern England*, Ashgate, Farnham.
LIVY, [27-25 BCE] 1919, *Ab Urbe condita – History of Rome*, ed. and trans. Benjamin Oliver Foster, vol. 1 (Books 1-2), Harvard U.P., Cambridge (MA).
MACDONALD, MICHAEL and MURPHY, TERENCE R., 1990, *Sleepless Souls: Suicide in Early Modern England*, Clarendon P., Oxford.
MCEACHERN, CLAIRE, 1988, "Fathering Herself: A Source Study of Shakespeare's Feminism", *Shakespeare Quarterly* 39 (3), pp. 269-90.
MCLUSKIE, KATHLEEN, 1992, "Lawless Desires Well Tempered", in Susan Zimmerman (ed.), *Erotic Politics: Desire on the Renaissance Stage*, Routledge, London.
MIDDLETON, THOMAS, [1600] 2007, *The Ghost of Lucrece*, in Gary Taylor, John Lavagnino *et al.* (eds), *Thomas Middleton: The Collected Works*, O.U.P., Oxford.

MIOLA, ROBERT STEVEN, 1983, *Shakespeare's Rome*, C.U.P., Cambridge.
MOORE, JOHN R., 1928, "Thomas Heywood's 'Pack Clouds Away' and *The Rape of Lucrece*", *Studies in Philology* 25 (2), pp. 171-7.
PHILLIPPY, PATRICIA, 2002, *Women, Death and Literature in Post-Reformation England*, C.U.P., Cambridge.
RITSCHER, LEE, 2009, *The Semiotics of Rape in Renaissance English Literature*, Peter Lang, New York.
ROBERTS, JEANNE ADDISON, 2002, "Sex and the Female Tragic Hero", in Naomi Conn Liebler (ed.), *The Female Tragic Hero in English Renaissance Drama*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, pp. 199-216.
ROBERTSON, ELIZABETH and ROSE, CHRISTINE M., 2001, *Representing Rape in Medieval and Early Modern Literature*, Palgrave, New York.
RONAN, CLIFFORD JOHN, 1995, *"Antike Roman": Power Symbology and the Roman Play in Early Modem England, 1585–1635*, U. of Georgia P., Athens (GA).
ROWLAND, RICHARD, 2010, *Thomas Heywood's Theatre, 1599–1639: Locations, Translations and Conflicts*, Ashgate, Farnham.
SHAKESPEARE, WILLIAM, [1594] 1992, *The Rape of Lucrece*, in John Roe (ed.), *The Poems*, C.U.P., Cambridge.
SHAKESPEARE, WILLIAM and MIDDLETON, THOMAS, [1606] 2004, *The Life of Timon of Athens*, ed. John Jowett, O.U.P., Oxford.
SHAKESPEARE, WILLIAM, [1607] 1995, *Antony and Cleopatra*, ed. John Wilders, Methuen, London.
SOLGA, KIM, 2009, *Violence against Women in Early Modern Performance: Invisible Acts*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke.
STREETE, ADRIAN, 2009, *Protestantism and Drama in Early Modern England*, C.U.P., Cambridge.
ZALLER, ROBERT, 2007, *The Discourse of Legitimacy in Early Modern England*, Stanford U.P., Stanford.