University of Bamberg Press

Wagner, Hans-Peter

The Female "I" in Drag : Shakespeare's Lucrece

In:

Susan Brähler; Kerstin-Anja Münderlein (Hrsg.), "When men are unprepared and look not for it"•: in Memoriam Christoph Houswitschka, Bamberg: University of Bamberg Press, S. 509-526. DOI: 10.20378/irb-96531

Beitrag im Sammelwerk - Verlagsversion

DOI des Beitrags: 10.20378/irb-105223

Datum der Veröffentlichung: 04.12.2024

Rechtehinweis:
Dieses Werk ist durch das Urheberrecht und/oder die Angabe einer Lizenz geschützt. Es steht Ihnen frei, dieses Werk auf jede Art und Weise zu nutzen, die durch die für Sie geltende Gesetzgebung zum Urheberrecht und/oder durch die Lizenz erlaubt ist. Für andere Verwendungszwecke müssen Sie die Erlaubnis der Rechteinhaberinnen und Rechteinhaber einholen.

Für dieses Dokument gilt die **Creative-Commons-Lizenz CC BY.**

Die Lizenzinformationen sind online verfügbar:
https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/

The Female "I" in Drag: Shakespeare's Lucrece

Hans-Peter Wagner, Rheinland-Pfälzische Technische Universität Kaiserslautern-Landau, Campus Landau

William Shakespeare's *The Rape of Lucrece* was first published in 1594, probably from his own manuscript, by Richard Field, who had also printed *Venus and Adonis* the previous year. Like so many other works of literature, the text comes to us wrapped up as it were in other texts calling for our attention. The poem is preceded by a dedication and "The Argument", a summary of the Roman legend of Lucrece. French narratologist Gérard Genette has argued most persuasively that we must not ignore such paratexts precisely because they are both "thresholds" of and ways into the major text, guiding (and sometimes deliberately misguiding) us in our first steps (1987). Like *Venus and Adonis, The Rape of Lucrece* bears a dedication to Henry Wriothesley, 3rd Earl of Southampton. In the humble and self-denigrating manner that distinguishes such dedications, Shakespeare describes his "untutored Lines" in mock-marital terms as "a superfluous Moiety" (Greenblatt et al. 702). More important for the sexual and textual play that follows is the fact that he gives voice to a love between men, a desire that – even if it excludes sex – reconfirms and verbally represents the powerlines of a discursive field controlled by men. I hope to show that the mentality and ideology created in this masculine field proved overwhelming even for Shakespeare when he tried to create a female voice. The language of power affected the very metaphors by which Renaissance intellectuals lived, and the power of this gendered language thoroughly permeated art and literature.

The introductory "The Argument" is a text in prose providing a summary not of the poem but of the Latin versions of the Lucrece myth as told by Livy and Ovid. Since Shakespeare's poem makes no reference to the larger political context – specifically the tyranny of the Tarquins and the subsequent revolt against their rule – the Shakespeare industry has had great trouble with this prose text whose style and syntax are modelled on Latin. Thus J.W. Lever argued that "it is hard to see why Shakespeare should have wished to introduce his poem with an account so little related to its contents" (108). Lever wonders why the story's political implications are brought in at the very beginning and then suggests that "the 'Argument' was not by Shakespeare at all, but was commissioned by the printer from someone else in the hope that this would help to make the poem more readable" (108). But the inclusion of "The Argument" does make sense precisely because it sets the entire plot of the subsequent poem, and ultimately the rape and death of the heroine, in a context that is both political and patriarchal, suggesting a reading of *The Rape of Lucrece* in ideological-political terms. The major body of the poem does not make it entirely clear because it contains a number of disparate narrative

and artistic traditions, yet the initial paratext guarantees that Lucrece's suffering and suicide are understood not as the heroic deed of a chaste and faithful woman but as a necessary event in the political arena, a sacrifice required for the establishment of a new republic.

Written in rhyme royal, also known as the Chaucer stanza, which is composed of seven five-stress lines rhyming ababbcc, *The Rape of Lucrece* has 1855 lines. A part of its continuing attraction lies in the fact that as a narrative dramatic poem it contains important rhetorical and poetic forms reaching back to Chaucer and the Middle Ages. As an epyllion, a little epic, it is also a supreme example of Renaissance *copia*, as Shakespeare expands the short passage in Ovid's *Fasti*, II (ll. 721-852) into almost 2,000 lines while incorporating a number of details from Livy's *History of Rome*. To Samuel Daniel's *Complaint of Rosamond* (1592) he is indebted not only for the stanza form but also for an entire genre, the formal complaint or lament, in the part where Lucrece seizes the word after the rape. Preceded by what Stephen Greenblatt has diagnosed as a violent form of erotic "chafing" (Greenblatt 88, 183n27) – i.e. the passage where Tarquin and Lucrece engage in a debate –, Lucrece's complaint gave Shakespeare

> the opportunity to fuse his classical material with a popular vernacular form, the lyrical lament of the (frequently female) victim who has been deserted by a lover or otherwise abused. This genre . . . had a rich medieval pedigree and a storehouse of examples in the *Mirror for Magistrates* (1559), one of Shakespeare's major sources. (Bate, *Ovid* 66)

Shakespeare was 30 years old when *Lucrece* was published. His outstanding plays as well as his best poetry were still to come. In the 1590s, Shakespeare was working on *Titus Andronicus* and some comedies – *The Comedy of Errors, The Taming of the Shrew,* and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* (see the chronology in Suerbaum 326). It is hardly surprising then that *The Rape of Lucrece* shows Shakespeare's great talent for borrowing (in this case from Renaissance treatments of the Lucrece story based mainly on Ovid), a talent that presents minor strains for postmodern readers, as we become aware of an "excess of ornamentation and conceit, an addiction to paradox, oxymoron and antithesis" (Lever 9) as well as an excessive and at times tedious reliance on the soliloquies of the Senecan revenge tragedy, which is most obvious in the first part, when Tarquin deliberates on the consequences of the rape, and especially in Lucrece's lament in which she "endlessly reduplicates verbal figures without achieving any emotional advance" (Bate, *Ovid* 75). One example should demonstrate both Shakespeare's traditional use of the blazon[1] and the embedding of this poetic-rhetorical form in a patriarchal culture.

[1] Shakespeare was later to attack the blazon in his sonnets: see especially no. 130: "My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun / Coral is far more red than her lips' red / If snow be white why then her breasts are dun."

In this passage, Tarquin has penetrated into Lucrece's chamber and first takes possession of her with his gaze:

> Her lily hand her rosy cheek lies under,
> Coz'ning the pillow of a lawful kiss,
> Who, therefore angry, seems to part asunder,
> Swelling on either side to want his bliss;
> Between whose hills her head entombed is,
>   Where like a virtuous monument she lies
>   To be admired of lewd unhallowed eyes.
>
> Without the bed her other fair hand was
> On the green coverlet, whose perfect white
> Showed like an April daisy on the grass,
> With pearly sweat resembling dew of night.
> Her eyes like marigolds had sheathed their light,
>   And canopied in darkness sweetly lay
>   Till they might open to adorn the day.
>
> Her hair like golden threads played with her breath –
> Oh, modest wantons, wanton modesty! –
> Showing life's triumph in the map of death,
> And death's dim look in life's mortality.
> Each in her sleep themselves so beautify,
>   As if between them twain there were no strife,
>   But that life lived in death, and death in life.
>
> Her breasts like ivory globes circled with blue,
> A pair of maiden worlds unconquered,
> Save of their lord no bearing yoke they knew
> And him by oath they truly honòred.
> These worlds in Tarquin new ambition bred,
>   Who like a foul usurper went about
> From this fair throne to heave the owner out. (ll. 386-413)[2]

This is surely a perfect example of pictures (and iconotexts, i.e. verbal-visual constructs) as agents, of what has been discussed in art theory (e.g. by Lacan; W.J.T. Mitchell, *Iconology* and *Picture Theory*; Wagner; and Louvel) as "the ability of artistic and visual objects to attain a form of emotional and psychological agency with regard to the beholder" (Elam 31). The passage stages the female body in a conventional erotic topography that invites the voyeuristic male gaze to enjoy and finally conquer this helpless, sleeping victim as if it were a landscape, a monument, a field, or a newly discovered world. Most interesting is the final stanza of the blazon with its conceit of the breasts as globes. Since the blazon is a mapping

[2] Subsequent quotations are from the *Norton Shakespare*, 2016, edited by Stephen Greenblatt et al., 695-744.

of woman's body, one must not forget that mapping is also a means of control, much as the active gaze serves as such a means. "Tarquin is like an ambitious Elizabethan adventurer setting out to conquer the virgin land of the New World, so that it can be mapped and appear on the globe emblazoned with a name . . . he wants the 'maiden worlds' for himself and that entails displacing the rightful owner" (Bate, *Ovid* 73). There is no questioning here of the husband-wife relationship, of Collatine's right of possession; the closing couplet of the stanza states the (Roman and Elizabethan) marital conditions in simple if brutal terms: women are bound to their husbands and can be treated like chattel (Fletcher 1995 and Belsey 2001). The ornamental rhetoric of the conceit is thus clearly embedded in a gendered discourse which, paradoxically, seems to be devised to praise women but ultimately subordinates them to the law of the father, husband and king (on sympathy and consent in the poem, see Arkin).

In his analysis of the metaphors of the poem, for which Shakespeare drew on both Ovid and Marlowe's *Hero and Leander*, Koppenfels terms *The Rape of Lucrece* "ein rechtes Stiefkind der Shakespeare-Forschung" (76). He is right in so far as the modern editors, in their introductions to the poem, do not make high claims for *Lucrece*. In fact, Prince, in 1960, argued that the poem "as a whole, is a failure", with "glaringly obvious ... defects of rhetoric". Maxwell, in 1966, considers Lucrece "unsatisfactory, uneven, and inchoate", and Lever (1971) too believes that the poem is artistically faulty, not least because "the lady protests too much" (qtd. in Wells 1990, 70-71). Only very few male critics have given the poem some attention, and that attention has invariably focused on moral issues (see the survey in Wells 71-72). Over the past decades, the major critical analyses have come from feminists mostly concerned with gendering, the verbal representation of rape, and the issue of a female voice, with James Heffernan's insightful study of the ekphrastic aspect as a notable exception (the debate can be said to have started with Nancy Vickers's essay of 1985; see also Heffernan 1993).

In what follows I want to reassess what seems to be a *fait accompli* for Stanley Wells, surely one of the best-known Shakespeare critics of our time, when he argues that *The Rape of Lucrece* presents "an extended and fully articulated exploration of a female consciousness" (72). Focusing on some visual representations of the Lucrece myth, I will argue that Renaissance art constituted a very important discursive space for Shakespeare in that it helped shape the ideology of his texts. In a second step, I shall then turn to the problem of Lucrece's female voice in the context of its cultural embedding, including visual art. It can hardly be denied that visual representations were extremely important for Shakespeare, precisely because they were an 'obvious' part of his culture. My interest lies in the world view propagated by this art, in the ways it gendered the contemporaries' ways of seeing and judging, and, ultimately, in the manner in which the Shakespearean texts

adapted the rhetoric and ideology of the pictures circulating in his time. Maus holds that the story of Lucretia as a sexual melodrama held wide appeal for Renaissance painters who

> portrayed Tarquin stealing into Lucretia's bed, Lucretia stabbing herself, and Lucius Junius Brutus exhorting over her body in the marketplace, often incorporating all three scenes into the same picture. Lucretia became a focus of especially fierce debate . . . Lucretia could be held up, variously, as a model of female propriety and as an example of pagan willfulness, as a woman who breaks from usual constraints upon her sex even while she seems most strenuously to endorse them. (696)[3]

Perhaps the best known of all the paintings of the story is Titian's *Tarquin and Lucretia* (fig. 1), completed around 1570 (discussed in Donaldson 13-20).[4] What makes this picture remarkable, apart from a highly dramatic and pathetic mode, which for the post-modern viewer verges on the ridiculous, is the painter's handling of the shadows, of light and dark, and of the colours red and white. Shakespeare also uses such contrasts in his verbal conceits. The problem with the painting as well as with numerous others of the same subject is its appeal to the lustful male gaze once again. A typical example, often copied and imitated in the nineteenth century (when the notion of pornography arose in the middle class), is Felice Ficherelli's (or Ficarelli's) *The Rape of Lucretia* from the late 1630s, now in the Wallace Collection (fig. 2).

More than any other painterly version of the story, this stages an aggressive, voyeuristic view (with the observer mirrored in the servant watching the brutal scene) and unbridled male lust. The commentary on this painting in the Wallace Collection tells us that

> Ficherelli favoured violent scenes infused with an aura of morbid sensuality. In this work he represented the dramatic moment of confrontation between Lucretia and Sextus Tarquinius . . . Ficherelli invests the scene with an atmosphere of claustrophobic intimacy. The painting is a close, reduced replica of a much larger canvas by Ficherelli in the Accademia di San Luca, Rome. There are several known versions of the composition, dateable from the late 1630s (see Ficherelli).

[3] Maus's introduction to the poem contains black-and-white reproductions of Raphael's *Lucretia* (a drawing dated 1508-1510); Titian's oil painting *Tarquin and Lucretia* (1570), unfortunately without date, state/version and location, and a picture containing two scenes from the story in Jost Amman's *Icones Livianae* of 1572. For discussions of the importance of visual art for Shakespeare's work, see Sabatier 2016, Elam 2017, Marrapodi 2017, and Bate, *Classics*.

[4] Of the three existing versions (in Bordeaux, Cambridge, and Vienna), the one in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, is generally accepted as Titian's own work. See Pedrocco 297-98.

Fig. 1: Titian, Tarquin and Lucretia*, c.1570. Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, UK. Public domain.*

Fig. 2: Felice Ficherelli (or Ficarelli), The Rape of Lucrece*, c.1638. Wallace Collection, London, UK. Public domain.*

More to the point, however, is the fact that the painter, like many other artists and writers of the period, obviously catered to the taste of an audience that cherished a combination of violence, eroticism, and the adulation of male aggression in the act of what we now consider a terrible crime. Instead of (also) showing the horrible suffering of the female victim, the artist attributes to Lucrece the part of inviting, irresistible object of desire to be conquered and subdued. Titian and Ficherelli show the moment before the rape, thus clearly stimulating the erotic-aggressive imagination of the male viewer of the scene. One would expect that other painters focussing on Lucrece's suicide scene, such as Lucas Cranach the Elder (who left us countless versions of the subject), would have shown some sympathy for the cruel fate of the heroine. But in the dominating masculine spirit of his time, Cranach too shows a tempting Lucrece who is naked and, in some cases, engages the interest of the observer with what comes across as a mixture of defiance and seduction (fig. 3), whereas the classical sources stress the fact that she killed herself in front of witnesses. When Tarquin first touches her in Shakespeare's poem, Lucrece seems to be naked or half naked – later on, she is described as sleeping in a "nightly linen" (l. 680). The Renaissance painters frequently depicted Lucrece for a number of reasons: as many artists before and after them, they delighted in the beauty of the female body even while manoeuvring the observer into a voyeuristic position similar to that of the slave in Titian's painting and to the servant in Ficherelli's rendering. Thus, one of Cranach's Lucreces

produced between 1525-30 even displays her sex in a painterly scene where contemporary notions of woman as tempting Eve, vulnerable virgin, and innocent saint meet and mingle (fig. 4).

Fig. 3: Lucas Cranach the Elder, Lucrece, *1525. Private collection. Public domain.*

Fig. 4: Lucas Cranach the Elder, Lucrece, *1525-30. Private collection. Public domain.*

If the Titian painting of 1570 seems to represent a dramatic scene, it is because of two reasons. Firstly, the story of Lucrece’s rape and suicide was a popular dramatic story in the Renaissance and was enacted as such, a fact that clearly inspired Veronese’s treatment of the myth (1580-83). Secondly, women appeared in the role of Lucrece at masked balls and dances and as models for painters. A typical example is Lorenzo Lotto’s painting with the telling title *Portrait of a Woman Inspired by Lucretia* (c.1530-32; fig. 5). The picture contrasts the fate of a naked Roman Lucretia in the painting (held at arm’s length by this Venetian lady) with the chastity of the sitter, who indicates that she understands but does not share her Roman namesake’s predicament. Like most of Cranach’s Lucretias, Lotto’s sitter looks us straight in the eye, as though to assert that she has no cause for shame, and the words on a scrap of paper, lifted from Livy (*Nec ulla impudica Lucretiae exemplo vivet*: Never shall Lucretia provide a precedent for unchaste women; my translation), seem to confirm this rhetorical message of the painting.

This very brief look at visual representations suggests a few preliminary conclusions. To begin with, we must remember that the Renaissance pictures of Lucrece

Fig. 5: Lorenzo Lotto, Portrait of a Woman Inspired by Lucretia*, c.1530-32. National Portrait Gallery, London, UK. Public domain.*

represented “a mythology invented, sustained, and extended largely by men” (Donaldson 19); these versions, in collaboration with the verbal representations, eventually produced a gendered view of the story that was powerful enough even to determine the way women painted. When Artemisia Gentileschi, who was probably raped around 1612, painted *Tarquin and Lucrecia* (1645-50; fig. 6), she stayed “entirely within the conventions established by male artists such as Titian”, providing a “tacit invitation to voyeurism” while never questioning or disturbing the male gaze and gendered view of her predecessors (Donaldson 20). For their predominantly male audience, the artists of the Renaissance thus celebrated in their renderings of the Lucrece story the pleasure of seeing the naked female body and the prerogative of the male gaze at work; at the same time they titillated the erotic imagination of their customers (mostly aristocratic or upper-class men) who could imagine themselves in the role of Tarquin or as an observer/voyeur of what most of them would have seen as an erotic conquest rather than a despicable crime.

Fig. 6: Artemisia Gentileschi, Tarquin and Lucrecia*, 1645-50. Neues Palais, Potsdam, Germany. Public domain.*

I am not arguing that this is the only way of reading these paintings. But such visual representations, popularised in prints and imitations, contributed to the creation and cementing of a male-dominated cultural discourse that eventually produced a world view entailing the acceptance of Lucrece's fate as seen and interpreted by men.

When he devised the poetic, female, consciousness of Lucrece, Shakespeare worked in a culture or, as Gordon Williams terms it, climate (Williams 769-76), that had already defined the female voice. The voice of Lucrece emanates from an area of patriarchal ideology. This is clearly reflected in the very metaphors she employs once she is allowed to speak. It is significant that for much of the first part of the poem (almost 600 lines are dedicated to the description of Tarquin's deliberations) Lucrece is the silent and sleeping object of Tarquin's gaze and desire. The heroine first speaks to Tarquin in the "chafing scene", just before the rape (ll. 575-672), after he has threatened her in a most terrible manner. The brutal act is described by the authorial voice in an extremely short passage brimming with contrasting metaphors of good and evil, purity and corruption:

> This said, he sets his foot upon the light,
> For light and lust are deadly enemies.
> Shame folded up in blind concealing night,
> When most unseen, then most doth tyrannize.
> The wolf hath seized his prey, the poor lamb cries,
> Till with her own fleece her voice controlled,
> Entombs her outcry in her lips' sweet fold.
>
> For with the nightly linen that she wears
> He pens her piteous clamors in her head,
> Cooling his hot face in the chaste tears
> That ever modest eyes with sorrow shed.
> Oh, that prone lust should stain so pure a bed!
> The spots whereof could weeping purify,
> Her tears should drop on them perpetually. (ll. 673-86)

This is followed by Lucrece's lament. Coppélia Kahn has argued persuasively that in the first part of this complaint, as Lucrece delivers three diatribes against night, opportunity, and time, "the poem sinks into a bog of platitudes" (Kahn 153). At the end of this first passage, when Shakespeare compares her to the raped and voiceless Philomela in a related story from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, the narrator places Lucrece's rhetoric in the tradition of male representations of rape. The lines yield unintended irony in that Shakespeare praises his own trite comparisons lifted from Senecan revenge tragedies, Marlowe's poetry, and previous complaints, such as Daniel's *Complaint of Rosamond*.

By this, lamenting Philomel had ended
The well-tuned warble of her nightly sorrow,
And solemn night with slow sad gait descended
To ugly hell, when lo, the blushing morrow
Lends light to all fair eyes that light with borrow.
But cloudy Lucrece shames herself to see,
And therefore still in night would cloistered be. (ll. 1079-85)

In an intertextual allusion (the poem is studded with such references to mythological figures) that foreshadows her suicide while reminding the reader of another rape victim often portrayed in Renaissance literature and art, Shakespeare has his Lucrece identify with Tereus's victim:

"Come, Philomel, that sing'st of ravishment:
Make thy sad grove in my disheveled hair
As the dark earth weeps at thy languishment,
So I at each sad strain will strain a tear,
And with deep groans the diapason bear:
For burden-wise, I'll hum on Tarquin still,
While thou on Tereus descants better skill.

And whiles against a thorn thou bear'st thy part,
To keep thy sharp woes waking, wretched I,
To imitate thee well, against my heart
Will fix a sharp knife to affright mine eye,
Who if it wink shall thereon fall and die." (ll. 1128-39)

The second part of Lucrece's complaint (ll. 1366-1568) is fascinating for several reasons: it combines the complaint with an ekphrasis while allegedly giving voice to a female consciousness; it provides a psychological dimension; and, last but not least, it has been consistently misread by critics who insist on formal aspects and exclude the gendering, ideological function of the entire passage (Hawkins 149-64). Introduced by Shakespeare as a "means to mourn some newer way" (l. 1365), it constitutes the paradoxical attempt of the heroine to find in art what she cannot express in words. The passage is an ekphrasis (a verbal representation of a visual representation) that pretends to come from a female voice even while situating that voice in a discursive, poetic-literary field that is marked by patriarchal features. There is some unintended irony in the fact that Lucrece – a woman just threatened, raped, and debased – now turns to a

skillful painting made for Priam's Troy,
Before the which is drawn the power of Greece,
For Helen's rape the city to destroy,
Threat'ning cloud-kissing Ilion with annoy,
Which the conceited painter drew so proud
As heaven (it seemed) to kiss the turrets bowed. (ll. 1368-72)

Ignoring the plight of Lucrece for three pages, the authorial voice provides a detailed description of this notional painting to which Lucrece turns for solace, "to find a face where all distress is stelled" (l. 1444). One must admire Shakespeare's handling of the ekphrastic tradition in this case when he makes Lucrece single out and identify with the silent, mourning Hecuba, then condemn Helen, "the strumpet that began this stir" (l. 1471), and finally turning Lucrece into a real iconoclast trying to scratch Sinon's face. Eventually, she realizes that she is faced not with a real traitor but with a visual representation: "'Fool, fool', quoth she, 'his wounds will not be sore'" (l. 1568). Derived from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (Book XIII) and Virgil's *Aeneid* (Book I), but perhaps also based on a real picture (Heckscher), this lengthy ekphrasis (ll. 1366-1568) is not a digression, as Lever has argued (138). On the contrary, it perfectly fits the ideological pattern when we consider its function. For Lucrece, and for Shakespeare and his readers, the painting of Troy is an apposite representation of rape. If Lucrece spends so much time reading the picture as it were, it is because she feels like a city invaded: in line 1547, she refers to her body and chastity as "my Troy" (see the detailed discussion in Heffernan 78-82). The entire conceit thus introduced by the ekphrastic passage, the beautiful city or fortress invaded and destroyed with the help of a liar or cheat (Sinon and Tarquin: ll. 1499-1568), recalls the importance of the metaphors of war and hunting used throughout the poem (Koppenfels 79-83). Tarquin is portrayed as a predator seizing his prey or as a warrior attacking a fortified city, while Lucrece is identified – even before her lament – with the besieged city, thus taking a "traditionally feminine position in the same discourse as victim of and also witness to the pathos and grandeur of its agons" (Kahn 144). Heckscher notes that "when Shakespeare composed his *Lucrece*, folk literature, ballads, and bawdy songs . . . eulogized the pleasure of subduing cities as well as maidens" (28). Given the metonymy of woman for city, which has lasted from Shakespeare's time to our own day and age, the rape is "culturally speaking, inevitable" (Kahn 156).

If we ask with Mary Jacobus, "Is there a woman in this text?" (1982), one answer might be that Shakespeare gives us a female "I" in drag (I borrow the term from Miller), a voiceless creation which Nancy Vickers sees as the product of a rhetorical tradition through which the male gaze verbalises itself in the blazon (1985). This is especially true for the first part of the poem in which Lucrece is an object of description. In the second part, which contains the long ekphrastic passage allegedly mirroring her mind, Shakespeare tried to refashion a Lucrece as a subject somewhere between Roman and Christian values.[5] Simultaneously, Shake-

[5] The Christian reading of the story of Lucrece extends from medieval times through Chaucer to Rembrandt. See, for instance, Rembrandt's two versions of *Lucretia* of 1664 (National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.) and 1666 (The Minneapolis Institute of Arts), both discussed extensively by Bal, see especially the chapter on "The Rape of Lucretia", 64-86.

speare was looking for a new position for himself as poet. If he fails in both attempts, as Kahn argues (143), it is because he was overpowered by the rhetoric, both visual and verbal, of his age which upheld an ideology of gender in which women speak with the voices of men, with 'I's' in drag, or, as Harvey puts it, with ventriloquised voices (1995; see also Hehmeyer). If there was a masculine dominance in Shakespearean drama in that boys played the roles of women, his poetry presents an even more interesting case of gendering that demonstrates the social construction of the feminine (Quilligan 230). Significantly, when Lucrece has finally killed herself in the poem, Roman men seize the word again to put her deed in a political perspective. Brutus promises revenge, kisses "the fatal knife" – now a symbol of phallic rule, of threat, rape, and death – and decides with his friends to "show [Lucrece's] bleeding body through Rome" (l. 1851). Collatine's dead wife has become a mere cypher, a dead female body that has engendered a new Roman republic (Jed).

List of Illustrations

Figure 1. Titian, *Tarquin and Lucretia*. c.1570. Oil on canvas. 188.9 x 145.4 cm. Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, England. Public domain.

Figure 2. Felice Ficherelli (or Ficarello), *The Rape of Lucrece*. c.1638. Oil on tinned copper. 24.5 x 29.9 cm. Wallace Collection, London, England. Public domain.

Figure 3. Lucas Cranach the Elder, *Lucrece*. 1525. Oil on wood. 56.5 x 39.5 cm. Private collection. Public domain.

Figure 4. Lucas Cranach the Elder, *Lucrece*. 1525-30. Oil on wood. 37.5 x 26.7 cm. Private collection. Public domain.

Figure 5. Lorenzo Lotto, *Portrait of a Woman Inspired by Lucretia*. c.1530-32. Oil on canvas. 96.5 x 110.6 cm. National Portrait Gallery, London, England. Public domain.

Figure 6. Artemisia Gentileschi, *Tarquin and Lucrecia*. 1645-50. Oil on canvas. 261 x 226 cm. Neues Palais, Potsdam, Germany. Public domain.

Works Cited

Arkin, Samuel. "'That map which deep impression bears': Lucrece and the Anatomy of Shakespeare's Sympathy." *Shakespeare Quarterly*, vol. 64, 2013, pp. 349-71.

Bal, Mieke. *Reading 'Rembrandt': Beyond the Word-Image Opposition*. Cambridge UP, 1991.

Bate, Jonathan. *How the Classics Made Shakespeare*. Princeton UP, 2019.

---. *Shakespeare and Ovid*. Clarendon Press, 1994.

Belsey, Catherine. "Tarquin Dispossessed: Expropriation and Consent in *The Rape of Lucrece*." *Shakespeare Quarterly*, vol. 52, 2001, pp. 45-70.

Donaldson, Ian. *The Rapes of Lucretia: A Myth and its Transformations*. Clarendon Press, 1982.

Elam, Keir. *Shakespeare's Pictures: Visual Objects in the Drama*. Bloomsbury, 2017.

Ficherelli, Felice. Commentary on *The Rape of Lucrece* (c.1638). www.wallace-live.wallacecollection.org.

Fletcher, Anthony. *Gender, Sex and Subordination in England, 1500-1800*. Yale UP, 1995.

Genette, Gérard. *Seuils*. Seuil, 1987.

Greenblatt, Stephen. *Shakespearean Negotiations*. Clarendon Press, 1990.

Greenblatt, Stephen et al., editors. *The Norton Shakespeare*. 3rd ed., W.W. Norton, 2016.

Harvey, Elizabeth D. *Ventriloquized Voices: Feminist Theory and English Renaissance Texts*. Routledge, 1995.

Hawkins, Harriet. *The Devil's Party: Critical Counter-Interpretations of Shakespeare's Drama*. Clarendon Press, 1989.

Heckscher, William S. "Shakespeare in His Relationship to the Visual Arts: A Study in Paradox." *Research Opportunities in Renaissance Drama*, vols. 13-14, 1970-71, pp. 5-73.

Heffernan, James A.W. *Museum of Words: The Poetics of Ekphrasis from Homer to Ashbery*. U of Chicago P, 1993.

Hehmeyer, Jeffrey Paxton. "Heralding the Commonplace: Authorship, Voice, and the Commonplace in Shakespeare's *Rape of Lurece*." *Shakespeare Quarterly*, vol. 64, 2013, pp. 139-64.

Jacobus, Mary. "Is There a Woman in This Text?." *New Literary History*, vol. 14, 1982, pp. 117-41.

Jed, Stephanie, H. *Chaste Thinking: The Rape of Lucrece and the Birth of Humanism*. Indiana UP, 1989.

Kahn, Coppélia. "*Lucrece*: The Sexual Politics of Subjectivity." *Rape and Representation*, edited by Lynn A. Higgins and Brenda Silver, Columbia UP, 1991, pp. 141-59.

Koppenfels, Werner von. *Bild und Metamorphose: Paradigmen einer europäischen Komparatistik*. Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1991.

Lacan, Jacques. "Of the Gaze as Objet Petit a." *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, translated by Alan Sheridan, W.W. Norton, 1998, pp. 65-119.

Lever, J.W., editor. *William Shakespeare: The Rape of Lucrece*. Penguin 1971.

Louvel, Liliane. *Poetics of the Iconotext*. Ashgate, 2011.

Marrapodi, Michele. *Shakespeare and the Visual Arts: The Italian Influence*. Routledge, 2017.

Maxwell, J.C., editor. *William Shakespeare: The Poems*. Cambridge UP, 1966.

Maus, Katharine Eisaman. "Introduction to *The Rape of Lucrece*." *The Norton Shakespeare*, edited by Stephen Greenblatt et al., 3rd ed., W.W. Norton, 2016, pp. 695-99.

Miller, Nancy. "'I's in Drag: The Sex of Recollection." *The Eighteenth Century*, vol. 22, 1981, pp. 47-57.

Mitchell, W.J.T. *Iconology: Image, Text, Ideology*. U of Chicago P, 1986.

---. *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation*. U of Chicago P, 1994.

Pedrocco, Filippo. *Tizian*. Hirmer, 2000.

Prince, F.T., editor. *William Shakespeare: The Poems*. The Arden Shakespeare, 1960.

Quilligan, Maureen. "Staging Gender: William Shakespeare and Elizabeth Cary." *Sexuality and Gender in Early Modern Europe*, edited by James Grantham Turner, Cambridge UP, 1995, pp. 208-32.

Sabatier, Armelle. *Shakespeare and the Visual Arts: A Dictionary*. Arden Shakespeare, 2016.

Suerbaum, Ulrich. *Shakespeares Dramen*. Francke, 1996.

Vickers, Nancy. "The Blazon of Sweet Beauty's Best: Shakespeare's *Lucrece*." *Shakespeare and the Question of Theory*, edited by Patricia Parker and Geoffrey Hartman, Methuen, 1985, pp. 95-115.

Wagner, Peter. *Reading Iconotexts: From Swift to the French Revolution*. Reaktion Books, 1995.

Wells, Stanley, editor. *Shakespeare: A Bibliographical Guide*. Clarendon P, 1990.

Williams, Gordon. “The Coming of Age of Shakespeare’s Adonis.” *MLR*, vol. 78, 1983, pp. 769-76.